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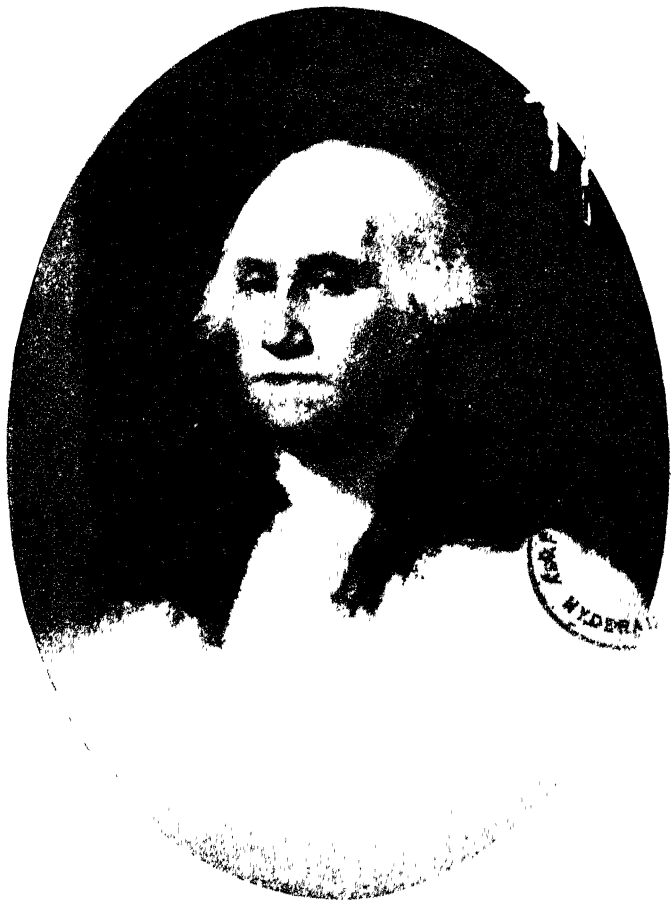
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GEORGE WASHINGTON.  
From the portrait by Gilbert Stuart.

# GEORGE WASHINGTON

PATRIOT, SOLDIER, STATESMAN

FIRST PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

BY

JAMES A. HARRISON

PROFESSOR IN THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA ; AUTHOR OF "THE  
STORY OF GREECE," ETC.

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G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

NEW YORK

LONDON

27 WEST TWENTY-THIRD STREET

24 BEDFORD STREET, STRAND

The Knickerbocker Press

1906



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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It gives the author great pleasure to acknowledge here the help afforded him in the preparation of this work by Mr. J. P. Kennedy, State Librarian, Richmond, Virginia; Mr. John S. Patton, Librarian of the University of Virginia; Miss Anna S. Tuttle, Assistant Librarian of the University; and Mr. R. Walton Moore of Fairfax, Virginia; and, above all, to Mrs. J. A. Harrison for invaluable assistance of every kind always cheerfully rendered.

It would be useless to enumerate the countless details of the Washington Bibliography in constructing even a brief narrative like this: suffice it to say that Washington's own Writings in the exhaustive and accurate edition of W. C. Ford form the chief source of the author's statements; and to these must be added the illuminating works of Fiske, Bancroft, McMaster, Winsor, Woodrow Wilson, Lecky, Trevelyan, P. L. Ford, and Hapgood; Marshall, Lodge, and G. W. P. Custis.

J. A. H.

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

February 22, 1906





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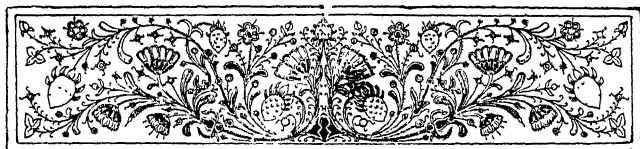
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# GEORGE WASHINGTON

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## CHAPTER I

### AT THE FIRESIDE

H EINE'S fanciful story of the wondrous cactus that slumbered a hundred years, and then sent up a strange and dazzling flower came literally true in the thorny evolution of American history. The flowering of Washington out of the cactus-like environment of American life in the eighteenth century is one of those psychological problems not wholly explicable on the ground of environment alone. Heredity, of course, had a crowning part in it. The strenuous character of the race has evolved in hundreds of years of struggle with men and things. When the brothers, John and Lawrence Washington, first emigrated to Virginia in Cromwell's day, the character of the strain had already been stamped with ineffaceable marks. The Transatlantic Virginian was the Transatlantic Englishman transformed into something more enduring, more tenacious, more granite-like in its hardness by incessant battling with aboriginal conditions; with the Redskin, with the wild wilderness, with the merchant adventurers, the London Companies, the

wrangling burgesses, with governors like Sir William Berkeley and soldiers like those prominent in Bacon's Rebellion. The incessant friction of colonial life in its semi-civilized stages sharpened the blunter specimens of English urban and civic life to a keenness and a fighting edge which, transmitted from father to son, became fixed in a type, and expanded into a character that was strangely composite, that drew into itself many elements, and became at last a moral and intellectual fabric of enduring strength and originality. What differentiated the Greek from all others was probably the SEA that shone and shimmered into his life at every angle, and fed the life of his soul with its subtle influences. What differentiated the Transatlantic Englishman from his island brother was the FOREST with its vast stretches of mysterious, unexplored territory filled with a subtle foe whose activity was perpetual.

The Redskin thus became a prime factor in early American education. The differentiations went on from the time "the Kingdom of Virginia" sprang out of the soft Western seas, and the land of the Powhatans and the Lady Pocahontas tickled the imagination of the poetic Elizabethans. A grave, serious, solemn, efficacious type was evolved, which waited a hundred, or a hundred and fifty years before its eyes twinkled in the sunny faces of William Byrd or Benjamin Franklin. The first two hundred years were a determined struggle for existence, along a coast-line 1800 miles and more in length, as it stretched in sinuous course from Boston to



St. Augustine and New Orleans, the edges of a mighty volume whose inner pages were writ large in labyrinthine wilderness, unexplored mountain, river, and savannah, and the endless vicissitudes of frontier life. Life on a gigantic scale opened before the dazzled eyes of John Smith, La Salle, Hernando de Soto, Marquette, and the Jesuit Fathers, and, unawed by its immensity, the joyous, tireless explorers pushed on up river and down lake, over mountain and through primeval forest, until their eyes fairly blazed with enthusiasm as their tongues told, in Purchas and Hakluyt and in the Jesuit journals, of the wonders of this Western "Orient" which many of them still supposed to be the golden Cathay or shadowy Cipango of Columbus and the poets.

It has required four hundred years and more to send a thin wave of population over this colossal region, and it will require four hundred more to people it as densely as the European homes from which the early navigators and immigrants sprang.

The triumphant conquest of the edges of these unimaginable lands occupied one hundred and fifty years, in the course of which, a new and noble type of immigrant manhood and womanhood saw the light. The petulant spirit of the five millions of Elizabethans, "cribb'd, cabin'd and confined" within the narrow limits of the British Isles, burst forth with overwhelming gaiety, as if in a huge carnival celebration, and, despite hunger, starvation, death in a thousand cruel forms, martyrdom in strange

unheard-of ways, torture and torment, continued to pour forth in numberless streams until the coast-line of the New World grew into a wonderfully picturesque and powerful duplicate of the European, like, yet marvellously unlike, in its varying features and phenomena. The eyes that look out from the old portraits belonging to this time have a singular depth and intensity, as if their owners beheld visions never before imagined by the commonplace dames and cavaliers across the water. Religion acquires an incandescent glow unknown in the older countries, and enshrines itself in temples and tabernacles erected on the borders of the wilderness, in the timbered town, among the plantation oaks, or appears passionately supplicating mercy in the quaint introductory clauses of old yellow wills and ancient vestry books.

It was in the beautiful and romantic Virginia of this time, the Virginia of Indian unrest and semi-civilisation, that George Washington was born at the old homestead of Wakefield, in Westmoreland County, February the Twenty-Second (New Style), 1732, about ten in the morning.

Wakefield was one of the homes of the Washington family at that time, in Eastern Virginia, and there this little household (increasing year by year) lived until the house burned down, from the carelessness, it seems, of good Madam Washington who took it into her head to burn brush and stubble raked together in the garden, and, incidentally, burnt her home to the ground. The servants fought the fire

heroically, but in vain, saving only a few articles of furniture and the ancient copy of Matthew Hale's *Contemplations, Moral and Divine*, now said to be at Mount Vernon.

This volume had belonged to Augustine Washington's first wife, Jane Butler, and descended to the second, in the easy and natural way of second marriages so prevalent in early Virginia.

What manner of house it was, where this Virginia family passed their earlier life, may be conjectured from the imaginative reconstruction of its details, found in the pages of the charming historian, Marion Harland:

"The blunted point of the triangle, formed by the creeks that furnished fat low-grounds on two sides of Augustine Washington's plantation of Wakefield, rested upon the Potomac, and was a mile in width. Wakefield comprised a thousand acres of as fine wood and bottom lands as were to be found in a county 'that, by reason of the worth, talents, and patriotism that adorned it, was called the Athens of Virginia.' The house faced the Potomac, the lawn, sloping to the bank between three and four hundred yards distant from the 'porch,' running from corner to corner of the dwelling. There were four rooms of fair size upon the first floor, the largest, in a one-story extension at the back, being 'the chamber.' The hip-roof above the main building was pierced by dormer-windows that lighted a large attic. At each end of the house was a chimney, built upon the outside of the frame dwelling, and of dimensions that made the latter seem disproportionately small. Each cavernous fireplace would hold

a half cord of wood, and the leaping blaze had all seasons for its own in a region where river fogs at evening and morning were vehicles of the dreaded 'ague and fever.' About the fireplace in the parlour, were the blue Dutch tiles much affected in the decorative architecture of the time. What a priceless scrap of bric-à-brac to a modern collector, would be one of those same enamelled squares, bedight with a representation of 'Abraham's Offering,' or 'Moses Breaking the Tables of the Law,' the tents of Israel, like a row of sharp haystacks, almost touching his knees, although ostensibly dwarfed in perspective until the whole camp was smaller than the tablets he hurled to earth!—the tiles that once reflected rosily the thoughtful face of the young wife, and gave distorted images of the blonde giant, her nominal lord and master, that, by and by, missed the musing face and slighter figure for a time, and then showed a double picture,—a visage paler and sweeter than of old, bent over the baby that was, from the beginning, the image of his mother. In the one-storied chamber the Moses of the New World was born, and the mother nursed the goodly child upon her bosom, in gladness and pride of heart, until the birth of the little Betty, in June, 1733. Between the stepmother and the two sturdy sons of Mr. Washington's first marriage, there existed cordial friendliness from the hour of her installation as mistress of the modest mansion. An elderly kinswoman had cared for them during their father's protracted absence, but, with the recollection of their own mother, hardly two years dead, in their memories, it spoke well for the little fellows, as for the new mother, that they yielded her respectful duty. Her early life had made

every detail of country housekeeping familiar to her. The retinue of servants was perhaps larger than that at Epping Forest had been, and the appointments of the house may have included relics of such grand living as had befitted Cave Castle, and went well with the stories, told over the logs on winter nights, of court-visits and royal preferments. Apostles of Democracy, though the Washingtons called themselves, they were ingrain aristocrats—the greatest of them not excepted.”<sup>1</sup>

The deepest glance into these earliest years of Madam Washington’s wife- and widowhood, and the boyhood and youth of George, has been cast by George Washington Parke Custis, adopted grandson of the chieftain, to whose *Recollections and Private Memoirs of Washington* all later historians, from Irving and Lossing down, are indebted for their intimate details. Custis saw and remembered the great dame but dimly, personally, being a boy only four years old when she died; but he lived at Mount Vernon until he was nineteen, and gathered what he records from the lips of the Washingtons and Lewises themselves.

The illustrious lady was just such a woman as one might have imagined to have been most perfectly suited to be the mother of an unannounced hero—plain, dignified, sincere, strong in the possession of the homely and home-like virtues, absolutely devoid of vanity or ostentation, without frivolity or feminine captiousness, reticent to a degree, and so free

<sup>1</sup> *The Story of Mary Washington*, by Marion Harland.

from self-consciousness that she did not hesitate, without any sense of false shame or humiliation, to receive Lafayette and his distinguished company, rake in hand, arrayed in the unpretentious homespun and sun-bonnet of the time. Her calm placidity of temperament was as if carved out of marble, or moulded into the antique lineaments of Judith or Miriam. No exultant cry ever broke from her lips, no matter how dazzling might have been the distinctions heaped, in flattering phrase, on his head, from the time when, by a kind of irrepressible buoyancy, the young son began to rise and to win one colonial dignity after another, as major, lieutenant-colonel, colonel, burgess, commander-in-chief, president: all seemed, to this undemonstrative woman, a matter of course, just as it should be. Though endowed with this apparent equability of temperament, Mary Washington's nature glowed with a suppressed fervour which transmitted itself to her son, and in him became power of endurance, passion for command, ambition to do and to dare in the colonial wars, spontaneous assumption of leadership, and the natural and easy command of men. Ardour, thus spiritualised, coins itself into the noblest ideals, into the tireless feet that explore the sources of the Nile, into the pen that writes the "Cosmos," into the exquisite harmonies that well up in the soul of Beethoven. Whether it take a martial or a musical, an intellectual or a physical turn, the fire that burns inward, the vestal flame on the altar of the soul, must be there, radiant, if still, not noisy and crackling.

Everybody who came near either Washington or his mother felt the suppressed glow that was in them. Intense heat sometimes has the effect of cold. Milton's remarkable epithet, "burns froze," aptly describes the burning frost of Washington's nature, the fiery chill that embarrassed his companions even in their most intimate intercourse with him, the latent fire that sometimes, though rarely, leapt to his lips in impassioned phrases.

This notable characteristic came from Mary Ball, and shines forth in many of the anecdotes related by Custis and her grandson, Lawrence Washington of Chotank. Says the latter :

"I was often [at the Washington home] with George, his playmate, schoolmate, and young man's companion. Of the mother I was ten times more afraid than I ever was of my own parents. She awed me in the midst of her kindness, for she was, indeed, truly kind. I have often been present with her sons, proper, tall fellows too, and we were all as mute as mice ; and even now, when time has whitened my locks, and I am the grand-parent of a second generation, I could not behold that remarkable woman without feelings it is impossible to describe. Whoever has seen that awe-inspiring air and manner so characteristic in the Father of his Country, will remember the matron as she appeared, when the presiding genius of her well-ordered household, commanding and being obeyed."

Custis, in the odd Johnsonian English of the early nineteenth century, thus describes her personal features :

"In her person, the matron was of middle size, and well-proportioned; her features pleasing, yet strongly marked. It is not the happiness of the author to remember her, having only seen her with infant eyes. The sister of the Chief, he perfectly well remembers. She was a most majestic-looking woman, and so strikingly like the brother, that it was a matter of frolic to throw a cloak around her and placing a military hat on her head, such was her amazing resemblance, that on her appearance, battalions would have presented arms and senates risen to do homage to the Chief."

The death of Augustine Washington, in 1743, when George was only eleven years old, broke up the happy Wakefield life and left the lady a widow at the early age of thirty-five, with a family of four sons and one daughter, besides the two sons of her husband's marriage with Jane Butler. Her admirable relations with these step-children incidentally throw a pleasing light on Mary Washington's home life, and the affection of Lawrence (one of these sons) for his half-brother George illustrates the cordial feeling among its various members, which was a distinguishing mark of the whole kith and clan of the Washingtons.

The idyll of Wakefield must have been almost as simple and unaffected, as devoid of incident and as undramatic, as that of the famous vicar painted by the contemporary Goldsmith. An earnest, serious, yet delightful boyhood seems to have been that of Washington: hunting, riding, shooting, fish-



ing, all healthy open-air exercises, filled its busy hours of morning and afternoon; and the few hours dedicated to intellectual work resulted in imparting to the boy, first at his mother's knee, then at the hands of Master Hobby, the sexton, and, later, at an "old-field" academy in or near Fredericksburg, the rudiments of a plain English education. Essentially a man of action, Washington never wholly rid himself of the defects and limitations of an early imperfect education. "William and Mary" and Princeton were then flourishing institutions, not impossibly distant from Fredericksburg, yet Washington was not sent to these institutions as Jefferson and Madison were, only a decade later. Latin and French, the not unusual polite accomplishments of the day in the colonies north of Virginia, were practically unknown to the Virginia schoolboy whose business-like turn of mind, influenced perhaps by its knowledge of the family's large possessions in land, fixed itself almost instinctively on mathematics, and, among the various branches of that science, chose surveying as the most remunerative.

In the same manner, Thomas Jefferson, Rogers Clark, and John Adams—not to mention the omniscient Franklin—directed their early faculties, and trained them by the surveyor's instruments of precision to those habits of exact thought which so signally distinguished three, at least, of these early typical Americans, and helped to make them tower above their contemporaries in scientific attainments.

Intimacy with the field and forest, with the flow-

ing expanse of river and estuary, with the mighty stretches of virgin wood that travelled in almost limitless undulations towards the Great Lakes and the Mississippi, thus entered naturally and indispensably into the lives of the young Americans, and evoked in them the self-reliance, fearlessness, personal hardihood, and undaunted courage characteristic of the men of that day.

If there is one feature more than another which astonishes the enervated idler of our days, it is the enormous personal sacrifices made by the men and women of the American eighteenth century, the exhaustless stores of physical strength required by the itineraries described in the memoirs of the period, the patience and prowess absolutely demanded by the smallest journey into the wilderness, and the Spartan toleration of hunger, fatigue, want, and disease, entailed by birth on this primitive society.

The softer courtesies of life were, however, not wholly neglected in the young Washington's early education.

"Among the manuscript books of George Washington, preserved in the State Archives at Washington City, the earliest bears the date, written in it by himself, 1745. Washington was born February 11, 1731, O. S., so that when writing in this book he was either near the close of his fourteenth, or in his fifteenth year. It is entitled *Forms of Writing*, and has thirty folio pages; the contents, all in his boyish handwriting, are sufficiently curious. Amid copied forms of exchange, bonds, receipts, sales, and similar

exercises, occasionally in ornate penmanship, there are poetic selections, among them lines of a religious tone on 'True Happiness.' But the great interest of the book centres in the pages headed: 'Rules of Civility and Decent Behaviour in Company and Conversation.' The book had been gnawed at the bottom by Mount Vernon mice, before it reached the State Archives, and nine of the 110 Rules have thus suffered, the sense of several being lost.

"The Rules possess so much historic interest that it seems surprising that none of Washington's biographers or editors should have given them to the world. Washington Irving, in his *Life of Washington*, excites interest in them by a tribute, but does not quote even one. Sparks quotes fifty-seven, but inexactly, and with his usual literary manipulation."<sup>1</sup>

It was in 1739 that Captain Augustine Washington moved to Fredericksburg, a little town on the Rappahannock, founded in 1727, by Colonel Willis, husband of Washington's aunt and god-mother. The family before this had resided, directly after George's birth, at Hunting Creek (afterwards Mount Vernon), having left Wakefield for that purpose. Mr. Conway establishes the fact that Washington's earliest recollections were with the beautiful estate belonging to his half-brother Lawrence, and named by him "Mount Vernon," in honour of the gallant English admiral under whom he had served at Carthagen and Porto Bello.

"Among the shiploads of convicts probably im-

<sup>1</sup> M. D. Conway's *George Washington's Rules of Civility*, 1890, pp. 7-8.

ported for labour purposes by Captain Augustine Washington, was one who had scholarly attainments, possibly a political exile, to whom, after his mother, Washington owed his earliest teaching. Some among these convicts were learned Scotchmen, men of rank and distinction, exiles for conscience' sake after Cromwell's insurrection and the return of the Stuarts; they were not necessarily criminals. Indentured servants and 'Redemptioners' (men who purchased their freedom, in exchange for their passage money over the Atlantic) were often persons of some literary accomplishment, who taught the children of their employers and thus ingratiated themselves as schoolmasters, clerks, bookkeepers, and the like with the high-born Virginia families. The classical scholar need not be reminded of Epictetus, Æsop, and Horace for examples of slaves and freedmen who have become the world's most celebrated and most admired teachers.

"Probably the school founded by James Marye [continues Mr. Conway] was the first in the New World in which good manners were seriously taught. Nay, where is there any such school to-day? Just this one colonial school, by the good fortune of having for its master or superintendent, an ex-Jesuit French scholar, we may suppose instructed in civility; and out of that school, it was little more than a village, came an exceptionally large number of eminent men. In that school, three American Presidents received their early education—Washington, Madison, and Monroe.

"In the manuscript of Colonel Byrd Willis, already referred to (loaned me by his granddaughter, Mrs. Tayloe, of Fredericksburg), he says: 'My father,



THOMAS JEFFERSON.  
From the painting by Gilbert Stuart.



Lewis Willis, was a schoolmate of General Washington, his cousin, who was two years his senior. He spoke of the General's industry and assiduity at school as very remarkable. Whilst his brother and other boys at play-time were at bandy and other games, he was behind the door, ciphering. But one youthful ebullition is handed down while at that school, and that was romping with one of the largest girls. This was so unusual that it excited no little comment among the other lads.' It is also handed down that, in boyhood, this great soldier, though never a prig, had no fights, and was often summoned to the playground as a peacemaker, his arbitration in dispute being always accepted."

The admirable wisdom of the 110 "Rules of Civility" must have sunk deeply into the heart and soul of this young scholar in a time when books were few and scarce, and maxims such as these had time to germinate, flower, and fruit in the life and conduct of the susceptible pupil. The last of these useful maxims became the guiding-star of Washington's whole career:

"Labour to keep alive in your Breast that little Spark of Celestial fire called Conscience."

This noble saying, due to the wisdom of the Jesuit Fathers among whom the Rev. James Marye had been educated, and of whose organisation he was once a member, became incarnate in the life of the illustrious American whose boyish hand transcribed it in quaint copy-book style and orthography. "The Rules of Civility" is, in its way, a volume on Moral

Philosophy whose assimilation and digestion are accentuated at every point of Washington's public and private life.

The Hebrew nation, in its Books of Wisdom, had condensed the marvellous essence of a worldly philosophy which has signally influenced its entire destiny and, through it, the fates and fortunes of every code of modern jurisprudence.

French urbanity, on the other hand, concentrates itself in these golden maxims and, by a happy anticipation, forehadows the profound influence of France on American affairs. It is a prophecy of Lafayette.



## CHAPTER II

### GREENWAY COURT : AN IDYLL OF THE SUMMER ISLES

OVER the spacious plantations of Virginia was scattered, in Washington's youth, a population of some 80,000 or 90,000 men, women, and children who had come thither in miscellaneous ways, some by birth, some from over seas, as Bohemians and wanderers on the face of the earth, some urged by love of money, traffic, or adventure, others fired by the imaginative pictures of the poet-travelers, Marco Polo, Sir John Mandeville, or Columbus. One hundred and twenty-five years had sped swiftly by since the first ship cast anchor off Jamestown, and the first load of anxious immigrants began gathering up their old-world belongings and dragging them laboriously and cautiously ashore. The clock of the Stuarts, which ticked so loudly in 1607, had subsided into the even-paced timepieces of the Georges, two of whom had already occupied the throne of the mother-country, three thousand miles away. The two or three little fissures, made in the mountain-wall of the unexplored New World at Hampton Roads, at Plymouth, at Manhattan, at Philadelphia, had widened into sluice-gates through which poured ever-broadening streams of European life and trade and population, that up every creek

and river and valley veined the land, like a human face, with the arteries of Eastern civilisation, and everywhere sowed sinuous lines of settlements from the ocean edge to the great inland oceans of fresh water that stretched far to the north-west.

Of this expanding "England in Virginia," Colonel Robert Beverley, its picturesque colonial historian, wrote in 1705<sup>1</sup>:

"The Country being thus taken into the King's Hands, his Majesty was pleased to establish the Constitution to be by a Governour, Council and Assembly. . . . This was a Constitution according to their Hearts' Desire, and Things seem'd now to go on in a happy Course for Encouragement of the Colony. People flock'd over thither apace; and, not minding any thing but to be Masters of great Tracts of Land, they planted themselves separately on their several Plantations."

It is no wonder that the land-loving "American" of that day distinguished himself by taking up these enormous tracts of land when we read on in Beverley:

"Here they enjoy all the benefits of a warm Sun, and by their shady Groves, are protected from its Inconvenience. Here all their Senses are entertain'd with an endless Succession of Native Pleasures. Their Eyes are ravished with the Beauties of naked Nature. Their Ears are Serenaded with the perpetual murmur of Brooks, and the thorow-base which the Wind plays, when it wantons through the Trees; the merry Birds, too, join their pleasing Notes to this rural Comfort;

<sup>1</sup> Robert Beverley's *Virginia*, p. 47.

especially the Mock-birds, who love Society so well, that whenever they see Mankind, they will perch upon a Twigg very near them, and sing the sweetest wild Airs in the World: But what is most remarkable in these Melodious Animals, they will frequently fly at small distances before a Traveller warbling out their Notes several Miles, an end, and by their Musick, make a Man forget the Fatigues of his Journey. Their Taste is regaled with the most delicious Fruits, which without Art, they have in great Variety and Perfection. And then their smell is refreshed with an eternal fragrancy of Flowers and Sweets, with which Nature perfumes and adorns the Woods almost the whole year round. Have you pleasure in a Garden? All things thrive in it, most surprisingly; you Can't walk by a Bed of Flowers, but besides the entertainment of their Beauty, your Eyes will be saluted with the charming colours of the Humming Bird, which revels among the Flowers, and licks off the Dew and Honey from their tender Leaves, on which it only feeds. It's size is not half so large as an *English* Wren, and its colour is a glorious shining mixture of Scarlet, Green, and Gold. Colonel Byrd, in his Garden, which is the finest in that Country, has a Summer-House set round with the Indian Honey-Suckle, which all the Summer is continually full of sweet Flowers, in which these Birds delight exceedingly. Upon these Flowers, I have seen ten or a dozen of these Beautiful Creatures together, which sported about me so familiarly, that with their little Wings they often fann'd my Face."<sup>1</sup>

This delightful Virginia of bird and beast and

<sup>1</sup> Robert Beverley's *Virginia*, p. 61.

flower emerges from fragrant clouds of tobacco-smoke, in the early historians, and lends itself to anecdote and idyllic description, of which the following extract gives characteristic specimens:

“Among other Indian Commodities, they brought over Some of that bewitching Vegetable, Tobacco. And this being the first that ever came to England, Sir Walter thought he could do no less than make a present of Some of the brightest of it to His Roial Mistress, for her own Smoaking.

“The Queen graciously accepted of it, but finding her Stomach sicken after two or three Whiffs, it was presently whispered by the earl of Leicester’s Faction, that Sir Walter had certainly Poison’d Her. But Her Majesty soon recovering her Disorder, obliged the Countess of Nottingham and all her Maids to Smoak a whole Pipe out amongst them.

“As it happen’d some Ages before to be the fashion to Saunter to the Holy Land, and go upon other Quixot Adventures, so it was now grown the Humour to take a Trip to America.”<sup>1</sup>

This “bewitching vegetable” thus cast its spell over the whole lifetime of Colonial Virginia, as, later, after 1776, the characteristic fragrance emanated from tea.

On the moral and intellectual side a glimpse of this enchanted Virginia may be got through the contemporary eyes of the Rev. Hugh Jones, one of the Fellows of William and Mary College, and its chaplain, who wrote:

<sup>1</sup> *The History of the Dividing Line*, p. 5.

“Virginia equals, if not exceeds, all others in Goodness of Climate, Soil, Health, Rivers, Plenty, and all Necessaries, and Conveniences of Life: Besides she has, among others, these particular Advantages of her younger Sister *Maryland*, viz. Freedom from Popery, and the direction of Proprietors; not but that Part of *Virginia*, which is between the Rivers *Potomack* and *Rappahannock* belongs to Proprietors, as to the Quit-Rent; yet the Government of these Countries (called the *Northern Neck*) is under the same Regulation with the other Parts of the Country.

“If New England be called a Receptacle of Dissenters, and an *Amsterdam* of Religion, *Pennsylvania* the Nursery of Quakers, *Maryland* the Retirement of Roman Catholicks, *North Carolina* the Refuge of Runaways, and *South Carolina* the Delight of Buccaneers and Pyrates, *Virginia* may be justly esteemed the happy Retreat, of *true Britons* and *true Churchmen* for the most Part; neither soaring too high nor drooping too low, consequently should merit the greater Esteem and Encouragement.

“The common Planters leading easy Lives don’t much admire Labour, or any manly Exercise, except Horse-Racing, nor Diversion, except Cock-Fighting, in which some greatly delight. This easy Way of Living, and the Heat of the Summer makes some very lazy, who are then said to be Climate-struck.”<sup>1</sup>

Again, the following extract illustrates quaintly the ultra loyalty and churchmanship of the Old Virginia parson, burning with enthusiasm for King and Church and drinking confusion to all Papists and dissenters:

<sup>1</sup> *The State of Virginia*, Hugh Jones, p. 48.

“And as in Words and Actions they (ministers) should be neither too reserved nor too extravagant; so in Principles should they be neither too high nor too low: The *Virginians* being neither Favourers of Popery nor the Pretender on the one Side, nor of Presbytery nor Anarchy on the other; but are firm Adherents to the Present Constitution in State, the Hanover Succession and the Episcopal Church of *England* as by Law established; consequently then if these are the Inclinations of the people, their Ministers ought to be of the same Sentiments, equally averse to papistical and schismatical Doctrines, and equally free from *Jacobitish* and *Oliverian* Tenets. These I confess are my principles, and such as the *Virginians* best relish, and what every good Clergyman and true *Englishman* (I hope) will favour; for such will never refuse to say with me:

*God bless the Church, and GEORGE its Defender,  
Convert the Fanatics, and baulk the Pretender.*

“For our Sovereign is undoubtedly the Defender and Head of our national Church of England, in which Respect we may pray for the *King* and *Church*; but Christ is the Head of the Universal or Catholick Church, in which Respect we wish Prosperity to the *Church* and *King*.”<sup>1</sup>

These “climate-struck” Virginians were fast developing into a manly and valiant race, who built for themselves log palaces on the margin of the illimitable waste, erected forts and palisades that soon transformed themselves in the oceanlike verdure around, into Miranda’s Enchanted Isle deep in

<sup>1</sup> *The State of Virginia*, Hugh Jones, p. 96.

the summer woodlands, and lacking only the "glistering spangles," that Captain John Smith saw in their sylvan streams, to bud forth into true Golcondas and Islands of the Blest, albeit anchored fast not in the waters of the New Atlantis, but to the sturdy trunks of the ancient aboriginal forests.

On one of these Summer Isles of plantation life, deep in the primeval woods, far out on the outposts of that lovely valley, where the sparkling Shenandoah danced between beautiful mountains on its crystal pilgrimage to the Potomac, had settled Thomas, Lord Fairfax, scion of the illustrious race that had served under Cromwell, the accomplished contributor to Addison's *Spectator*, on lands, millions of acres of which he had taken up by patent or purchase at the time of which we speak.

The emotions of the merchant adventurers, as they sighted these lands of the Hesperides and the charms of the envioning scenery, are vividly portrayed for us by an accomplished antiquary and annalist of these virgin times:

"It requires no extraordinary imagination to appreciate the emotions which stirred the breasts of the voyagers as they entered the Chesapeake, and sailed up the wide stretches of the Powhatan in the spring of 1607. Those were hours that offered the amplest compensation for all the hardships which they had endured. They had just finished a tedious and dangerous passage on the bosom of unknown seas. In the bleakest period of winter, under leaden skies and with sombre landscapes, the country which they had

reached would have been delightful to them; but, clothed in the verdure of the Virginian May, when the greenness of the foliage and the tints of the wild flowers have their deepest and softest coloring, it was quite natural that visions of an earthly Paradise should have arisen before their eyes, accustomed for so long a time to the heaving plains of the Atlantic. The lofty trees on the banks, representing many familiar and many new varieties, the noble breadth of the river, the balmy air laden with the odors of expanding leaf and blossom, the clearness of the atmosphere which produced such striking vividness of coloring, the bright sunshine, the strange birds, adorned with so many brilliant hues, flying hither and thither over the surface of the stream, or moving about in the branches of the trees that grew near its brink, the schools of fish that were constantly breaking the surface of the river into patches of flashing silver, the painted savages staring at the little fleet as it passed slowly along, all united to create a novel scene touching the sensibilities of the dullest and most prosaic of the adventurers. Nor was it the less inspiring when they recalled that they were the first persons of their race to look upon that beautiful expanse of river and forest, which, for a length of time almost incalculable, had existed just as they saw it then.

“The charming impressions as to the physical aspect of the country were confirmed by subsequent observations. Sir Thomas Dale, writing in 1613, only a few years after the first colony was established on Jamestown Island, declared that his admiration of Virginia increased as his opportunities for informing himself about its resources enlarged, and that he be-



lieved that it would be equivalent to all the best parts of Europe taken together, if it were only brought under cultivation and divided among industrious people. Percy was equally emphatic in asserting that if the promoters of the Virginian enterprise would only extend the adventurers a hearty support, the new country would be as profitable to England, in time, as the Indies had long been to the King of Spain. Whitaker describes it as a place beautified by God with all the ornaments of nature, and enriched with his earthly treasures. 'Heaven and Earth,' exclaimed Captain Smith, 'never agreed better to frame a place for man's habitation.' Williams apostrophized it as Virginia the fortunate, the incomparable, the garden of the world! which, although covered with a natural grove, yet was of an aspect so delightful and attractive, that the most melancholy eye could not look upon it 'without contentment, nor be contented without admiration.' 'For exactness of temperature, goodness of soil, variety of staples, and capability of receiving whatever else is produced in any part of the world, Virginia,' he remarks, 'gives the right hand of pre-eminence to no province under heaven.' 'Where nature is so amiable in its naked kind,' asks the author of *Nova Britannia*, 'what may we not expect from it in Virginia when it is assisted by human industry, and when both art and nature shall join to give the best content to men and all other creatures?' 'I have travailed,' said a leading member of the London Company, 'by land over eighteen several kingdoms and yet all of them, in my minde, come farr short to Virginia.'

"Such in part was the testimony as to the general

beauty and fertility of Virginia in its original condition.”<sup>1</sup>

Greenway Court, the home of the Fairfaxes (twelve miles S. W. of Winchester), was the spot in this picturesque Virginia whither the youthful Washington, at sixteen, now wended his way, eager to begin the work of surveying, for which he had specially prepared himself under Master Williams and the Rev. James Marye. Uncertain as the times are, we yet catch direct and searching glimpses of young Washington, as he flits to and fro in the fluctuating anecdote biographies of a later time eager to glean every ray of light radiating from this obscure period, and to concentrate it upon the figure of the growing man. From wills and letters and genealogies, from clerks' records and dusty church-wardens' books, from bundles of yellow MSS. tied up and stored away in antique secretaries, from private stores and public record-offices, pours this light and floods many a dark corner of Virginia history. Mrs. Pryor has vividly illuminated the twilight period of Washington's life as follows:

“Augustine Washington selected a fine site on the banks of the Rappahannock, opposite Fredericksburg, and near ‘Sting Ray Island,’ where the very fishes of the stream had resented the coming of Captain John Smith. The name of this home was Pine Grove. The situation was commanding, and the garden and orchard in better cultivation than those they had left.

<sup>1</sup> Bruce, *Economic History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century*, vol. i, pp. 73-75.

The house was like that at Wakefield, broad and low, with the same number of rooms upon the ground floor, one of them in the shed-like extension at the back; and the spacious attic was over the main building. It had its name from a noble body of trees near it, but was also known by the old neighbors as 'Ferry Farm.' There was no bridge over the Rappahannock, and communication was had with the town by the neighbouring ferry. 'Those who wished to associate Washington,' says another writer, 'with the grandeurs of stately living in his youth, would find all their theories dispelled by a glimpse of the modest dwelling where he spent his boyhood years. But nature was bountiful in its beauties in the lovely landscape that stretched before it. In Overwharton parish, where it was situated, the family had many excellent neighbors, and there came forth from this little home a race of men whose fame could gather no splendor, had the roofs which sheltered their childhood been fretted with gold and blazoned with diamonds. The heroic principle in our people does not depend for perpetuity on family trees and ancestral dignities, still less on baronial mansions.'

"Augustine Washington died in 1743, at the age of forty-nine, at Pine Grove, leaving two sons of his first wife, and four sons and one daughter our Mary had borne to him, little Mildred having died in infancy. We know then the history of those thirteen years, the birth of six children, the death of one, finally the widowhood and desolation of the mother.

"At the time of his father's death, George Washington was only eleven years of age. He had been heard to say that he knew little of his father except

the remembrance of his person and of his parental fondness. To his mother's forming care he himself ascribed the origin of his fortune and his fame.

"Mary Washington was not yet thirty-six, the age at which American women are supposed to attain their highest physical perfection. Her husband had left a large estate under her management, to be surrendered in portions as each child reached majority. Their land lay in different parts of the country,—Fairfax, Stafford, King George, and Westmoreland. She found herself a member of a large and influential society, which had grown rapidly in wealth, importance, and elegance of living since her girlhood and early married life in Westmoreland. Her stepson, Lawrence, married a few months after his father's death, and she was thus allied to the Fairfaxes of Belvoir—allied the more closely because of the devotion of Lawrence to her own son George. Lawrence, with his pretty Anne Fairfax, had gone to live on his inherited estate of 'Hunting Creek,' which he made haste to rechristen in honor of an English admiral, famous for having recently reduced the town and fortification at Porto Bello; famous for having reduced the English sailors' rum by mixing it with water. He was wont to pace his decks wrapped in a grogram cloak. The irate sailors called him and the liquor he had spoiled, 'Old Grog.' The irreverent, fun-loving Virginians at once caught up the word, and henceforth all unsweetened drinks of brandy or rum and water were 'grog,' and all unstable partakers thereof, 'groggy.'"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Pryor, *The Mother of Washington and Her Times*, p. 90.

The fertility of the New World soil was at least paralleled by that of the immigrant families, the abundance of the land being often more than matched by the superabundance of the children. The numerous and prolific marriages had rapidly peopled the Old Dominion with a steady growing stock of sturdy planters and settlers, for whom provision had to be made by anxious fathers and mothers, whether among the lands already possessed by patent, purchase, or marriage, or in the new countries and directions everywhere opening westward and southward toward the central rivers and valleys of the American Continent.

There were six sons of Augustine Washington (two by the first and four by the second marriage) to be provided for, thought of, settled in life, liberally allowanced, as became Virginia gentlemen. Lawrence (the eldest) was a graceful and polished cavalier who had entered the British Navy, married a Fairfax of Belvoir, begun the erection of the stately château of Mount Vernon in 1743-45, and had been amply remembered by his father. There were still John and George, Charles, Samuel, and Augustine (called August) to be considered.

The fascination which the sea had exercised over Lawrence Washington, and the possession of influential friends in that quarter, probably impelled him to select the navy as a promising possibility for George to whom he was specially devoted.

Accordingly, when George was fourteen, a midshipman's warrant was obtained for him, every prep-

aration was made for his departure, the very ship on which he was to take up his new life lay at anchor in the Potomac, when the anguish and timidity of Madam Washington, and an emphatic letter of disapproval from her brother Joseph Ball, who was living at Stratford-by-Bowe, near London, broke up the arrangement and George's career as a future Nelson or De Ruyter was for ever closed.

Mr. Joseph Ball's letter, as Bishop Meade quotes it in *Old Families of Virginia*, is as follows.<sup>1</sup>

“Stratford-by-Bow, 19th of May, 1747.

“I understand that you are advised and have some thoughts of putting your son George to sea. I think he had better be put apprentice to a tinker, for a common sailor before the mast has by no means the common liberty of the subject; for they will press him from a ship where he has fifty shillings a month and make him take twenty-three, and cut and slash and use him like a negro, or rather like a dog. And, as to any considerable preferment in the navy, it is not to be expected, as there are always so many gaping for it here who have interest, and he has none. And if he should get to be master of a Virginia ship (which it is very difficult to do), a planter that has three or four hundred acres of land and three or four slaves, if he be industrious, may live more comfortably, and leave his family in better bread, than such a master of a ship can. . . . He must not be too hasty to be rich, but go on gently and with patience, as things will naturally go. This method, without aiming at

<sup>1</sup> *Old Churches*, etc., vol. ii, p. 128.

being a fine gentleman before his time, will carry a man more comfortably and surely through the world than going to sea, unless it be a great chance indeed.

“I pray God keep you and yours.

“Your loving brother,

“JOSEPH BALL.”

It would form an interesting subject of speculation to conjecture what would have been Washington's future in that wonderful playground of ambition, intellect, personal gallantry, and world-wide opportunity—the British Navy; to what heights his noble, disinterested soul might have risen, what effect such a career would have had in determining his patriotism, and the yet unknown future of American independence. Even before he was out of his teens, Washington was already exhibiting qualities so remarkable, at the very threshold of his life, that there is small doubt of his winning supreme distinction in any position where high sense of duty, firm practical intelligence, passionate loyalty to principle, and untiring devotion to the good of his beloved Virginia were involved.

The intimacy with the Fairfaxes of Belvoir had doubtless early brought the boy under the notice of Thomas, Lord Fairfax, whose lordly domain, almost unexplored, a virgin *terra incognita*, stretched away westward over the Blue Ridge, in unsurveyed opulence. Surveying was then one of the lucrative professions for a young man of practical ability. An enormous acreage of public and private land lay practically unknown, outside the reach of the asses-

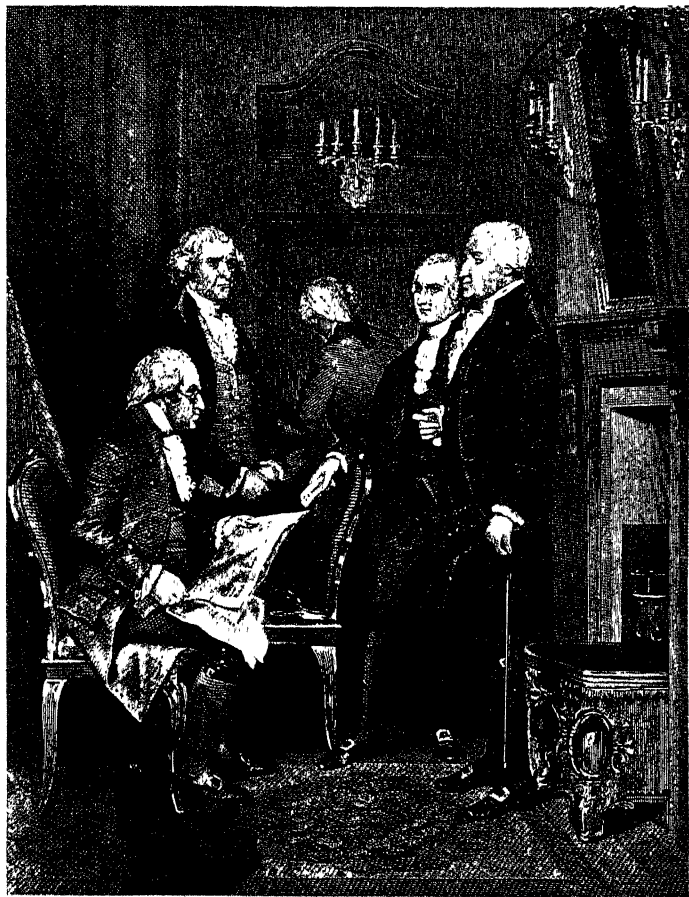
sor. There was doubtless, too, a charm in the trackless wilderness which exercised its magic over many a young Virginian's imagination, and sent him into the woods on missions of which surveying was only one,—possibly only an excuse.

With Washington, however, it was never an excuse but a sober, serious profession which he pursued to the end of his days, with which fact, any student of his journals and note-books, from 1748 to 1799, may easily familiarise himself.

His exact, detail-loving, mathematical mind took delight in the clank of the surveyor's chain, which suggested to him not the groan of the slave so much as the boundless freedom of the limitless, forest-crowned horizon.

In 1748, a month before he had actually reached his sixteenth year, Madam Washington's eldest son (who had received his name from George Eskridge, her trusted friend, says Mrs. Pryor) was in the employ of Lord Fairfax as salaried surveyor, at seven pistoles a day. And out of the almost mythic recesses of this period, comes a delicate murmur and reverberation, reminding us that this extraordinary boy was human, quelling our mythopoetic tendencies, and humanising him in a half ludicrous, half pathetic way: the "Idyll of the Summer Isles" was writing its prologue. Was it the "romping girl" of Fredericksburg, or some one of those five early sweethearts who evoked the genius of doggerel in the Father of his Country, and made his tongue spell out the difficult acrostic? At all events, there is





THE FIRST CABINET.  
From an old print.



something delightfully human in the way he addresses this unknown “Frances,” as there was, in after years, in the affectionate “Patsy” by which he addressed the dark-eyed widow of Daniel Parke Custis.

## CHAPTER III

### A BOY'S JOURNAL

“**I**T should be mentioned, however,” says Mr. M. D. Conway, “that young Washington’s head was not in the least turned by intimacy with the aristocracy. He wrote letters to his former playmates in which no snobbish line is discoverable. He writes to his ‘Dear friend Robin’: ‘My place of residence is at present at his lordship’s where I might, was my heart disengaged, pass my time very pleasantly, as there’s a very agreeable young lady lives in the same house (Colonel George Fairfax’s wife’s sister). But as that’s only adding fuel to fire it makes me the more uneasy, for by often and unavoidably being in company with her revives my former passion for your Lowland beauty; whereas, was I to live more retired from young women, I might elevate in some measure my sorrows by burying that chaste and troublesome passion in the grave of oblivion or etearnall forgetfulness, for, as I am very well assured, that’s the only antidote or remedy that I ever shall be relieved by or only recess that can administer any cure or help to me, as I am well convinced, was I ever to attempt anything, I should only get a denial which would be only adding grief to uneasiness.’

“The young lady at Greenway Court was Mary Cary, and the Lowland beauty was Betsy Fauntleroy, whose hand Washington twice sought, but who be-

came the wife of the Hon. Thomas Adams. While travelling on his surveys, often among the Red Men, the youth sometimes gives vent to his feelings in verse.

'Oh Ye Gods, why should my Poor resistless Heart  
Stand to oppose thy might and Power  
At last surrender to Cupid's feather'd Dart  
And now lays bleeding every Hour  
For her that's Pityless of my grief and Woes,  
And will not on me Pity take.  
I'll sleep among my most inveterate Foes  
And with gladness never wish to wake,  
In deluding sleepings let my Eyelids close  
That in an enraptured dream I may  
In a rapt lulling sleep and gentle repose  
Possess those joys denied by Day.'

"And it must also be recorded that if he had learned how to conduct himself in the presence of persons superior to himself in position, age, and culture,—and it will be remembered that Lord Fairfax was an able contributor to the *Spectator* (which Washington was careful to study while at Greenway),—this youth no less followed the instruction of his 108th rule: 'Honour your natural parents though they be poor.' His widowed mother was poor, and she was ignorant, but he was devoted to her; being reverential and gracious to her even when, with advancing age, she became somewhat morose and exacting, while he was loaded with public cares.

"I am no worshipper of Washington. But in the hand of that man of strong brain and powerful passions once lay the destiny of the New World,—in a sense, human destiny. But for his possession of the humility and self-discipline underlying his Rules of Civility, the ambitious politicians of the United States

might, to-day, be popularly held to a much lower standard. The tone of his character was so entirely that of modesty, he was so fundamentally patriotic, that even his faults are transformed to virtues, and the very failures of his declining years are popularly accounted successes. He alone was conscious of his mental decline, and gave this as a reason for not accepting a third nomination for the Presidency. This humility has established an unwritten law of limitation on vaulting presidential ambitions. Indeed, intrigue and corruption in America must ever struggle with the idealised phantom of this grand personality.”<sup>1</sup>

“His lordship” was no other than Thomas, Lord Fairfax, “who,” says a well-known historian, “himself came to Virginia in 1746—a man strayed out of the world of fashion at fifty-five into the forests of a wild frontier. The better part of his ancestral estates in Yorkshire had been sold to satisfy the creditors of his spendthrift father. These untilled stretches of land in the Old Dominion were now become the chief part of his patrimony. ’T was said, too, that he had suffered a cruel misadventure in love at the hands of a fair jilt in London, and so had become the austere, eccentric bachelor he showed himself to be in the free and quiet colony. A man of taste and culture, he had written with Addison and Steele for the *Spectator*; a man of the world, he had acquired, for all his reserve, that easy touch and intimate mastery in dealing with men, which come with the long practice of such men of fashion as are also men of sense. He brought with him to Virginia, though past fifty, the fresh vigor of a young man eager for the free pioneer life of such a

<sup>1</sup> M. D. Conway, *Rules of Civility*, p. 43.

province. He tarried but two years with his cousin, where the colony had settled to an ordered way of living. Then he built himself a roomy lodge, shadowed by spreading piazzas, and fitted with such simple appointments as sufficed for comfort, in the depths of the forest, close upon seventy miles away, within the valley of the Shenandoah, where a hardy frontier people had but begun to gather. The great manor-house he had meant to build was never begun. The plain comforts of 'Greenway Court' satisfied him more and more easily as the years passed, and the habits of a simple life grew increasingly pleasant and familiar, till thirty years and more had slipped away and he was dead, at ninety-one, broken-hearted, men said, because the King's government had fallen upon final defeat and was done with in America.

"It was in the company of these men, and of those who naturally gathered about them in that hospitable country, that George Washington was bred. 'A stranger had no more to do,' says Beverley, 'but to enquire upon the road where any gentleman or good housekeeper lived, and there he might depend upon being received with hospitality,' and 't was certain many besides strangers would seek out the young major at Mount Vernon, whom his neighbors had hastened to make their representative in the House of Burgesses, and the old soldier of the soldierly house of Fairfax, who was President of the King's Council, and so next to the Governor himself. A boy who was much at Mount Vernon and at Mr. Fairfax's seat, Belvoir, might expect to see not a little that was worth seeing of the life of the colony.'" <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Woodrow Wilson, *George Washington*, pp. 49-51.

Thus it was that this great heart, in the immediate presence of a scion of the Old World, began to feel those human dreams and pangs to which every one has been subject since the world began.

At sixteen, the precocious, self-educated boy wrote the following Journal, which, full as it is of boyish inaccuracies, is interesting not only as the first piece of authentic connected composition from his hand, but still more so, psychologically, as revealing his early grasp of detail when almost a child. Already one sees in it that developing force which led Governor Dinwiddie, six years later, to send him as a kind of Ambassador to the French, in the Ohio Valley, and publish, at the expense of the State, his graphically written Journal of the expedition.

#### “JOURNAL OF A BOY SURVEYOR

“Friday, March 11th, 1747-8. Began my Journey in company with George Fairfax, Esqr.; we travell’d this day 40 miles to Mr. George Neavels in Prince William County.

“Saturday, March 12th. This Morning Mr. James Genn, ye surveyor, came to us; we travell’d over ye Blue Ridge to Capt. Ashbys on Shannandoah River. Nothing remarkable happen’d.

“Sunday, March 13th. Rode to his Lordship’s Quarter about 4 miles higher up ye river. We went through most beautiful Groves of Sugar Trees, and spent ye last part of ye Day in admiring ye Trees and richness of ye Land.

“Monday 14th. We sent our baggage to Capt. Hites (near Frederick Town), went ourselves down



ye River about 16 miles to Capt. Isaac Pennington's (the Land exceeding rich and fertile all ye way—produces abundance of Grain, Hemp, Tobacco, &c.) in order to lay of[f] some Land on Cates Marsh and Long Marsh.

“Tuesday 15th. We set out early with intent to run round ye sd. Land, but being taken in a rain, and it increasing very fast obliged us to return. It clearing about one o'clock and our time being too Precious to loose, we a second time ventured out and worked hard till night, then returned to Penningtons. We got our suppers and [I] was Lighted into a Room and I not being so good a woodsman as ye rest of my company, striped myself very orderly and went into ye Bed, as they call'd it, when to my surprise, I found it to be nothing but a little straw matted together without sheets or any thing else, but only one thread bear blanket with double its weight of vermin, such as Lice, Fleas, &c. I was glad to get up (as soon as ye Light was carried from us). I put on my cloths and lay as my companions. Had we not been very tired, I am sure we should not have slep'd much that night. I made a Promise not to sleep so from that time forward, chusing rather to sleep in ye open air before a fire, as will appear hereafter.

“Wednesday 16th. We set out early and finish'd about one o'clock and then Travelled up to Frederick Town, where our Baggage came to us. We cleaned ourselves (to get Rid of ye Game we had catched ye night before). I took a Review of ye Town and then return'd to our Lodgings where we had a good Dinner prepared for us. Wine and Rum Punch in plenty,

and a good Feather Bed with clean sheets, which was a very agreeable regale.

“Thursday 17th. Rain’d till ten o’clock and then clearing we reached as far as Major Campbells, one of their Burgesses about 25 miles from Town. Nothing remarkable this day nor night, but that we had a Tolerable good Bed [to] lay on.

“Friday 18th. We Travell’d up about 35 miles to Thomas Barnwicks, on Potowmack, where we found ye River so excessively high by reason of ye great Rains that had fallen up about ye Allegany Mountains, as they told us, which was then bringing down ye melted snow and that it would not be fordable for several Days. It was then about six foot higher than usual and was rising. We agreed to stay till Monday. We this day calld to see ye Fam’d Warm Springs. We camped out in ye field this night. Nothing remarkable happened till Sunday ye 20th.

“Sunday 20th. Finding ye river not much abated we in the evening swam our horses over and carried them to Charles Polks in Maryland, for pasturage till ye next Morning.

“Monday 21st. We went over in a Canoc and Travelled up Maryland side all ye Day in a continued Rain to Col. Cresaps, right against ye mouth of ye South Branch, about 40 miles from Polks, I believe ye worst road than ever was trod by Man or Beast.

“Tuesday 22d. Continued Rain and ye Freshes kept us at Cresaps.

“Wednesday, 23d. Rained till about two o’clock and cleared, when we were agreeably surprised at ye sight of thirty odd Indians coming from war with only one scalp. We had some Liquor with Us of which we

gave them Part, it elevating there spirits, put them in ye humor of Dauncing, of whom we had a War Daunce. There manner of Dauncing is as follows, viz.: They clear a Large Circle and make a great Fire in ye middle. Men seat themselves around it. Ye speaker makes a grand speech, telling them in what manner they are to daunce. After he has finishd ye best Dauncer jumps up as one awaked out of a sleep, and Runs and Jumps about ye Ring in a most comicle manner. He is followed by ye Rest. Then begins there musicians to Play. Ye musick is a Pot half full of water, with a Deerskin streched over it as tight as it can, and a goard with some shott in it to rattle and a Piece of an horse's tail tied to it to make it look fine. Ye one keeps rattling and ye others drumming all ye while ye others is Dauncing.

"Fryday, 25th, 1748. Nothing remarkable on thursday, but only being with ye Indians all day. So shall slip it. This day left Cresaps and went up to ye mouth of Paterson's Creek, and there swum our horses over, got over ourselves in a canoe and travelled up ye following part of ye Day to Abram Johnstones, 15 miles from ye mouth, where we camped.

"Saterday, 26. Travell'd up ye creek to Solomon Hedges, Esq., one of his Majesty's Justices of ye Peace for ye County of Frederick, where we camped. When we came to supper there was neither a Cloth upon ye Table nor a knife to eat with; but as good luck would have it, we had knives of our own.

"Sunday, 27th. Travell'd over to ye South Branch, attended with ye Esqr. to Henry Van Metriss, in order to go about Intended work of Lots.

"Monday, 28th. Travell'd up ye Branch about 30

miles to Mr. James Rutlidges Horse Jockey, and about 70 miles from ye mouth.

“Tuesday, 29th. This Morning went out and surveyd five hundred acres of Land, and went down to one Michael Stumpe on ye So. Fork of ye Branch. On our way shot two wild Turkies.

“Wednesday, 30th. This Morning began our Intended business of Laying of[f] Lots. We began at ye Boundary Line of ye Northern 10 miles above Stumps, and run of[f] two Lots, and return'd to Stumps.

“Thursday, 31st. Early this Morning one of our men went out with ye gun, and soon returned with two wild Turkies. We then went to our business run of[f] three lots, and returned to our camping place at Stumps.

“Thursday Fryday, April ye 1st, 1748. This Morning shot twice at wild Turkies but killd none. Run of[f] three Lots and returnd to camp.

“Saturday, April 2d. Last night was a blowing rainy night. Our straw catch'd a Fire, yt. we were laying upon. I was luckily preservd by one of our Men's awaking when it was in a [1]. We run of[f] four lots this day which reached below Stumps.

“Sunday, 3d. Last Night was a much more blustering night than ye former. We had our tent carried quite of[f] with ye wind, and was obliged to Lie ye latter part of ye night without covering. There came several Persons to see us this day. One of our men shot a wild Turkie.

“Monday, 4th. This Morning Mr. Fairfax left us with intent to go down by ye mouth of ye Branch.

<sup>1</sup> Word crased.

We did two Lots and was attended by a great Company of People, men Women, and children, that attended us through ye woods as we went, shewing there antick tricks. I really think they seem to be as ignorant a set of people as the Indians. They would never speak English but when spoken to, they speak all Dutch. This day our tent was blown down by ye violentness of ye wind.

"Tuesday, 5th. We went out and did 4 Lots. We were attended by ye same Company of People, yt. we had ye day before.

"Wednesday, 6th. Last night was so Intolerably smoky that we were obliged all hands to leave ye Tent to ye Mercy of ye wind and Fire. This day was attended by our afored, Company, up till about 12 o'clock. When we finished, we Travell'd down ye Branch to Henry Van Metriss. On our journey was catchd in a very heavy rain. We got under a straw House until ye worst of it was over, and then continued our Journey.

"Thursday, 7th. Rained successively all last night. This morning one of our men killd a wild Turkie that weight 20 Pounds. We went and surveyd 15 Hundred acres of Land and returnd to Van Metriss about 1 o'clock. About two I heard that Mr. Fairfax was come up and at 1 Peter Cassey's about 2 miles of[f] in ye same old field. I then took my horse and went up to see him. We eat our Dinners and walked down to Van Metris's. We stayed about two hours and walked back again, and slept in Cassey's House which was ye first night I had slept in a House since I came up to ye Branch.

"Fryday, 8th. We breakfasted at Cassey's and rode

down to Van Metris's to get all our Company together, which when we had accomplished, we rode down below ye Trough in order to lay of[f] Lots there. We laid of[f] one this day. The Trough is couple of Ledges of Mountains, impassable, running side and side together for above 7 or 8 miles and ye River down between them. You must ride round ye back of ye Mountain for to get below them. We camped this Night in ye woods near a wild Meadow, where was a large stack of Hay. After we had pitched our Tent and made a very large Fire, we pulled out our Knap-sack, in order to Recruit ourselves. Every one was his own cook. Our Spits was forked Sticks, our Plates was a large Chip; as for Dishes, we had none.

“Saterday, 9th. Set ye Surveyors to work, whilst Mr. Fairfax and myself stayed at ye Tent. Our Provision being all exhausted and ye Person that was to bring us a Recruit disappointing us, we were obliged to go without untill we could get some from ye neighbors, which was not untill 4 or 5 o'clock in ye Evening. We then took leaves of ye Rest of our Company, road down to John Colins in order to set of[f] ye next Day homewards.

“Sunday, 10th. We took our farewell of ye Branch and travelld over Hills and Mountains to Coddys, on Great Cacapehon, about 40 miles.

“Monday, 11th. We travelld from Coddys down to Frederick Town, where we reached about 12 o'clock. We dined in Town and then went to Capt. Hites and lodged.

“Tuesday, 12th.—We set of[f] from Capt. Hites in order to go over Wms. Gap's about 20 miles, and after riding about 20 miles we had 20 to go, for we

had lost ourselves and got up as high as Ashby's Bent. We did get over Wms. Gap that night, and as low as Wm. West in Fairfax County, 18 miles from ye Top of ye Ridge. This day see a Rattled snake, ye first we had seen in all our journey.

“ Wednesday, ye 13th of April, 1748. Mr. Fairfax got safe home and I myself safe to my Brothers, which concludes my Journal.” <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> W. C. Ford, *The Writings of George Washington*, vol. i.

## CHAPTER IV

### WASHINGTON'S UNIVERSITY

THE world has always seemed curious to know how its great men received their learning and training, how and where they were educated, who were their teachers and trainers, and what moulding influences gathered about their childhood and youth and fashioned them for their fate to be. Perhaps the most interesting of all the works of Xenophon is the limpid narrative in which he describes the birth, training, and schooling of the great Cyrus; even the fictitious "Frenchy" biography of *Télémaque* possesses a charm, quite apart from its grace of style, in the attractive way in which it represents, under antique forms and transparent pseudonyms, the upbringing of a luxurious prince surrounded by the dissipations of a gorgeous court. Literary sybarites linger with delight over the educational pages of Montaigne, of Massillon, and of *Wilhelm Meister*, and in every biography and autobiography that appears, perhaps those pages are most keenly relished which deal with the school life and home influences of the world's noted men and women. The mother's knee antedates the school desk or the church-pulpit. The fascinating skill of Xenophon draws aside the curtain, and lets our eye rest upon



a mighty Oriental potentate as he is taught the elemental truths of life, to ride, to swim, to hurl the javelin, and to tell the truth, the simplest duties of everyday existence, the power of self-government and of self-control, the duties to ourselves and others : one gazes at the picture and finds the Persian system in many ways admirable. Then we turn to Plutarch and find in his marvellous biographies the Spartan and Roman, the Athenian and Oriental chapters of educational experience graphically contrasted, and full of instruction for the modern reader interested in the pedagogical problems of the ancients. The subtle moralisings of Goethe and Montaigne afford deep glimpses into the education of their authors, and invest each with a kind of halo which sharply distinguishes the French and German systems from each other.

Washington was the finest product of the planter commonwealth; *his* Oxford and Cambridge were the floods and fields, the ups and downs of the Old Virginia life, the experiences of the rough, practical surroundings in which he found his boyhood entangled, the beguiling ways and free-and-easy hospitalities of that stately old freeman's commonwealth, which had founded itself along the Chesapeake and the James in the golden days of Stuart and Guelph. The coming of the cavaliers had filled this New Atlantis, risen out of the Western seas, with a free and noble population, largely made up of gentle folk whose gentility had become impatient at home, and sought new avenues of relief abroad.

A year before Jacques Cartier, creeping out of St. Malo in his tiny craft of thirty tons' burthen, had crossed the seas and sailed up the St. Lawrence to the sites of Quebec and Montreal, Virginia had presented itself to the English navigators of Jamestown as a mighty stairway, up whose five-fold stair of Tidewater, Middle, Piedmont, Shenandoah, and Appalachian Virginia, crept an ever-increasing, often-defeated, never-discouraged, indefatigable tide of human beings as patient and implacable as the sea itself, having a choice eye for choice localities, full of the healthy human selfishness that takes the best it can get—where all is free—with the least possible effort, settling the rich river-valleys and game-haunted mountain gorges, and making themselves generally comfortable wherever they went, despite Pamunkies, Chickahominies, Shawnees, Mingos, or Cherokees with which every covert at the time abounded. The few hundred immigrants at Old Point and Hampton Roads had expanded by this time up and down, all things considered, into a solid million of alert, keen-eyed, intelligent frontiersmen, whose "frontier," in five generations, had pushed back from the blue Atlantic to the Blue Ridge, the Alleghanies, and the Ohio.

The novelty of this life and of these conditions in Virginia in the eighteenth century had not yet worn off; the blue smoke curling heavenward from a thousand wigwams showed still, in Washington's youth and early manhood, the power and plenitude of that slowly receding Indian barbarism which

filled the sunset line with thrilling adventure, and sharpened men's eyes and ears and muscles to the presence of a numerous and dangerous foe. Less than a hundred miles from his native Westmoreland, in and about which his father's five thousand patrimonial acres were situated, Washington received much of his training, particularly at Greenway Court, on the outskirts of a remote wilderness which lost itself westward in immeasurable distances of territory, untrodden save by the feet of deer and bear and Red Man. The daring missionary, the lonely Jesuit *voyageur*, impelled by conscience and by zeal for the French king, alone had stolen through its measureless solitudes, and down its mighty rivers, and over its ocean-like lakes from Ontario and the St. Lawrence to St. Louis, Natchez, and New Orleans, far down into tropical Louisiana. The hunter, the trapper, the seekers after gold and pearls, the romantic dreamer in search of the Fountain of Youth, traversed these appalling wastes, built their huts on river-bank and mountain height, staked out their claims here and there in regions vast as the sea itself, and lived and died as pioneers—often as martyrs—of the civilisation to come.

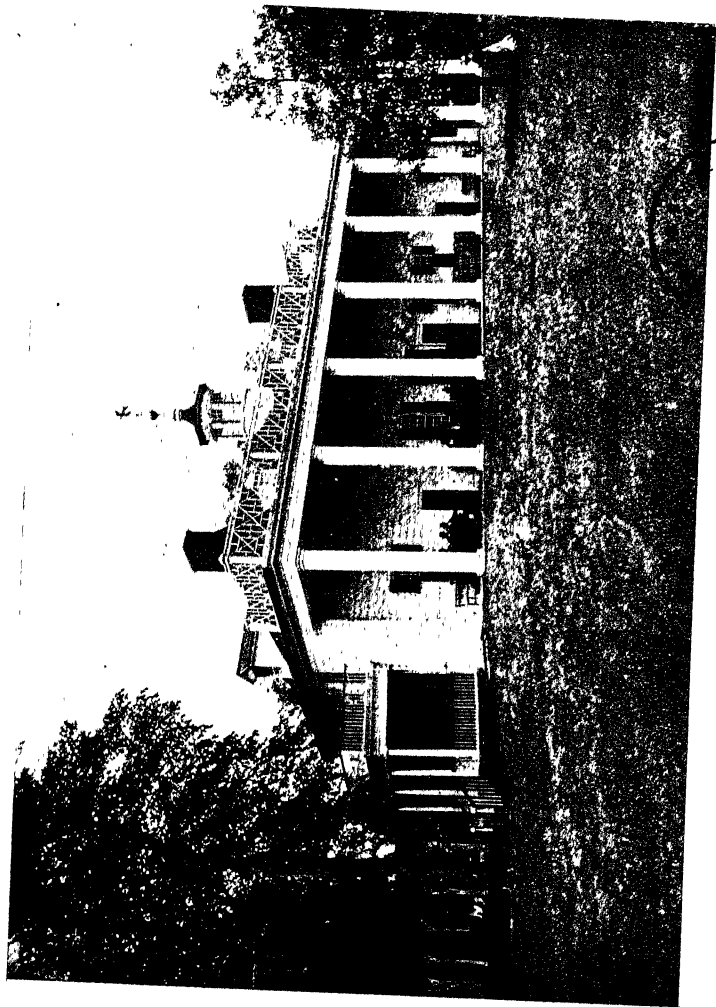
This earnest, active life of intense physical unrest and energy was the school in which Washington became an apt and ready scholar, a student of men and of things, a man of affairs, alive in every nerve and muscle, cautious, resourceful, strong as a young Hercules to endure sickness and privation, crafty

as Odysseus himself in the exercise of a quick intelligence, ripe for action, and wise in counsel far beyond his years, in many things a veritable sage of twenty; having "small Latin and less Greek" (like his brother Shakspeare), but possessing a profound, almost a marvellous, knowledge of the world around him, rising to high supreme command in the West almost in his 'teens, and revealing in his Journal to the Ohio (published by command of the Governor, in 1754), such insight, discretion, and powers of command as prophesied for him a brilliant future.

When his "loving brother" Lawrence fell ill, in 1752, George gave up the forest seclusion of the lovely Shenandoah Valley, with all its happy textbooks of hill and dale and teeming trout-stream, and hurried back to Mount Vernon to accompany Lawrence to Barbadoes and the Bahamas, whither delicate lungs called him. But the radiant Caribbean proved only a Calypso's Isle whose gorgeous air had no healing in it. Washington himself was attacked by small-pox after accepting a "conscience" invitation to dinner at a house where the scourge (about to be greatly alleviated by Jenner's famous discovery) was prevalent.

Soon after this, Lawrence died, leaving his estates first to his little daughter and then to his brother George, should the daughter die without issue.

She died almost immediately after her father, and thus to George, the youngest executor and special favourite of Lawrence, fell the noble acres of Mount



MOUNT VERNON, WASHINGTON'S HOME.  
From a Photograph.



Vernon (called also Epsewasson or Hunting Lodge).

And now begins that intense and strenuous "curriculum" of Washington's education, which started with his forest matriculation as surveyor to Lord Fairfax in 1747-8, and continued through the storm and stress of the French and Indian Wars until his marriage in 1759, at the age of twenty-seven, to Martha Custis.

The graphic metaphor of the mediævalist likened such an education to the course of the chariot, as it wound its way to the goal over the mazy spaces of the Greek stadium or the Roman amphitheatre, where racers and athletes fixed their burning eyes on contending charioteers, and where the winners of the goal—the diploma of "graduation" in this *gradus ad Parnassum*—received universal acclaim from the bystanders.

The bystanders in Washington's case were his neighbours, the planters of the stalwart young commonwealth, the House of Burgesses, and the Colony of Virginia itself, all of whom, it seems, had eagerly watched the remarkable career of Mary Ball's eldest son, and felt that within it lay notable developments. The long-legged, lank, hollow-chested, awkward Wakefield boy had grown into a superb specimen of young Virginian manhood, "straight as an Indian arrow," wrote his adopted grandson, dignified, commanding-looking, every inch a man and a gentleman, powerful in physique, gracious though slightly cold in manner, reticent rather than rushing in

speech, infinitely cumulative of details, almost a martinet in matters of decorum, pedantically microscopic in his attention to minutiae, yet with an eye as keen as an Indian's for distant possibilities and opportunities to benefit King, crown, and colony.

George Washington was at this time a "King George's man," devotedly loyal, supremely subservient to the wishes of his royal master as reflected in the orders of Council and the direction of the Governor, a British subject who had never yet dreamt of severance from his sovereign, a Virginian Englishman, in whose loyal arteries swept a tide of English blood as hot for King and Parliament as ever coursed in the bodies of Pitt and Fox, Chatham and Burke, soon to be his face-to-face "contemporaries"—in debate at least—on the banks of the Thames.

And it is a singular fact that the implacable foes of this "undergraduate" time were not the English who lay, as it were, still submerged beneath the Eastern horizon, but—the French, in a few short years to become his friends, admirers, almost worshippers. Says John Fiske :

"Hitherto the struggle with the House of Bourbon had been confined to Canada, at one end of the line, and Carolina at the other, while the centre had not been directly implicated. In the first American Congress, convened by Jacob Leisler at New York, in 1690, for the purpose of concerting measures of defence against the common enemy, Virginia (as we



have seen) took no part. The seat of war was then remote, and her strength, exerted at such a distance, would have been of little avail. But in the sixty years since 1690, the white population of Virginia had increased fourfold, and her wealth had increased still more. Looking down the Monongahela River to the point where its union with the Alleghany makes the Ohio, she beheld there the gateway to the Great West, and felt a yearning to possess it; for the westward movement was giving rise to speculations in land, and a company was forming for the exploration and settlement of all that Ohio country. But French eyes were not blind to the situation, and it was their king's pawn, not the English, that opened the game on the mighty chessboard. French troops from Canada crossed Lake Erie, and built their first fort where the city of Erie now stands. Then they pushed forward down the wooded valley of the Alleghany, and built a second fortress and a third. Another stride would bring them to the gateway. Something must be done at once.

"At such a crisis, Governor Dinwiddie had need of the ablest man Virginia could afford to undertake a journey of unwonted difficulty through the wilderness, to negotiate with Indian tribes, and to warn the advancing Frenchmen to trespass no further upon English territory. As the best person to entrust with this arduous enterprise, the shrewd old Scotchman selected a lad of one-and-twenty, Lord Fairfax's surveyor, George Washington. History does not record a more extraordinary choice, nor one more completely justified." <sup>1</sup>

Virginia needed, indeed, the presence of this ex-

<sup>1</sup> Fiske, *Old Virginia and Her Neighbours*, vol. ii, p. 378.

traordinary young man just at the time and place at which the shrewd "merchant governor" of the Colony, Dinwiddie, a canny and observant Scot, summoned him. He was one of those "climate-struck" Virginians who, though foreign-born, fell under the benign influence of the region and remained in the country as a "merchant adventurer," long after he had ceased to represent his Majesty as chief magistrate of the commonwealth. His keen Scotch eyes had watched the rise and progress of this young Virginia cavalier, whom in a letter to Hamilton, Governor of Pennsylvania, he described as "a person of distinction," and had found in him such premonitions of strength and efficiency as to compel him, in a way, to choose Washington rather than another from the crowd of distinguished gentlemen, old as well as young, who might have served the King at this crisis. One catches glimpses of the looming form of the nascent diplomat and general, even then, when he had hardly entered upon the enjoyment of his Mount Vernon estates, and the delightful social life of the period, and when the charms of home life, the beauty of his plantations, the spell of horse and hound and angler's rod and the coquetry of winsome women would to most youths of one-and-twenty have proved most irresistible. The education of the forest, of the chain and theodolite, of the spacious geometries of heaven and earth in which his youth had been passed, the self-made, self-taught qualities of his manly and self-dependent nature, kindling with the unquenched

ambition to serve his colony and people, urged him to throw aside the enticing appeals of self-indulgent ease, and to present himself to the Governor as a willing instrument in endeavouring to make the difficulties of the colony less insurmountable and less intolerable. He was, of all the Virginians of his day, the one best fitted for Dinwiddie's delicate and dangerous mission, the one best combining a profound knowledge of Indian craft and cunning with surest reliance upon himself, prudence, foresight, Stoic powers of endurance, and a boundless pride and conscientiousness that would drive him to the uttermost, and make him bate no jot or tittle of irksome detail to make the embassy a complete success. He set out on his task with an energy that bordered on fury, in a kind of Berserker rage, possessed with an impelling desire to push into the wilderness, carry through his negotiations, and return to quaint old Williamsburg, on the Middle Plantation, with full information of the machinations of the French in the far Ohio Valley.

For here it was that the whole trouble hinged. The French had come flowing down from the North in a mighty tide of mission-work and conquest, which threatened to swallow up the English frontier, unsettle boundaries, quicken and deepen Indian hostility, and make the border-lands, westward of New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and the Carolinas, uninhabitable by men of Anglo-Saxon breed, and to kindle the flames of a perpetual feud.

Washington's intimate knowledge of Indian ways

and wiles, his skill in woodcraft, his known courage and dauntless spirit, pointed him out as the one man born to plunge into the waste and bring thence to his people definite intelligence of the purpose of the French, and definite suggestions of what was now best to be done to foil them. No Laodicean was he, with lukewarm heart and limping intelligence, quaking in his shoes over imaginary difficulties, or quibbling over details of administration or rank; but straightforward, direct, absolutely devoid of selfishness or vanity from the very start, a whole-souled Virginia gentleman and soldier, intent on duty perfectly performed, and nothing else, neither expecting nor caring for any one's commendation except Dinwiddie's and that of his own conscience.

Hear his own account of the mission:

#### "ADVERTISEMENT

"As it was thought advisable by his Honour the Governor to have the following Account of my Proceedings to and from the FRENCH on OHIO, committed to Print I think I can do no less than apologise, in some Measure, for the numberless Imperfections of it.

"There intervened but one Day between my Arrival in Williamsburg, and the Time for the Council's Meeting, for me to prepare and transcribe, from the rough Minutes I had taken in my Travels, this Journal; the writing of which only was sufficient to employ me closely the whole Time, consequently admitted of no leisure to consult of a new and proper Form of the old: Neither was I apprised, nor did in the least con-

ceive, when I wrote this for his Honour's Perusal, that it ever would be published, or even have more than a cursory Reading; till I was informed, at the Meeting of the present General Assembly, that it was already in the Press.

"There is nothing can recommend it to the Public, but this. Those Things which came under the Notice of my own Observation, I have been explicit and just in a Recital of:—Those which I have gathered from Report, I have been particularly cautious not to augment, but collected the Opinions of the several Intelligencers, and selected from the whole, the most probable and consistent Account.

"G. WASHINGTON."

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"Wednesday, October 31, 1753.

"I was commissioned and appointed by the Honourable *Robert Dinwiddie*, Esq., Governor, etc., of *Virginia*, to visit and deliver a letter to the Commandant of the *French* forces on the *Ohio*, and set out on the intended Journey the same day: The next, I arrived at *Fredericksburg*, and engaged Mr. *Jacob Vanbraam*, to be my *French* interpreter; and proceeded with him to *Alexandria*, where we provided Necessaries. From thence we went to *Winchester*, and got Baggage, Horses, etc.; and from thence we pursued the new Road to *Wills-Creek*, where we arrived the 14th of *November*.

"Here I engaged Mr. *Gist* to pilot us out, and also hired four others as Servitors, *Barnaby Currin* and *John Mac-Quire*, Indian Traders, *Henry Steward*, and *William Jenkins*; and in company with those persons, left the Inhabitants the Day following.

“The excessive Rains and vast Quantity of Snow which had fallen, prevented our reaching Mr. *Frazier's* an Indian Trader, at the Mouth of *Turtle Creek*, on *Monongahela* [River], till *Thursday*, the 22d. We were informed here, that Expresses had been sent a few Days before to the Traders down the River, to acquaint them with the *French* General's death, and the Return of the major Part of the *French* Army into Winter Quarters.

“The Waters were quite impassable, without swimming our Horses; which obliged us to get the Loan of a Canoe from *Frazier*, and to send *Barnaby Currin* and *Henry Steward* down the *Monongahela*, with our Baggage, to meet us at the Forks of *Ohio*, about 10 miles, there to cross the *Aligany*.”

He winds up this remarkable document, which fills some twenty-five octavo pages, with the following expressions :

“I hope what has been said will be sufficient to make your Honour satisfied with my Conduct; for that was my Aim in undertaking the Journey, and chief Study throughout the prosecution of it.”<sup>1</sup>

This Journal, filled as it is with homely yet minute and important facts, might well be called Washington's “graduation essay,” a bit “of original search and research” in the wilderness, of the highest significance to the interest of the commonwealth, based on the severest personal investigation. This study of aboriginal conditions and of French diplomacy lasted two months and a half, and con-

<sup>1</sup> Ford, *Writings of George Washington*, vol. i, p. 39.

stitutes a striking story of Darkest America in the time just before the Revolution, when all the forces and energies on the continent were about to gather for the supreme struggle between Guelph and Bourbon, between George II and Louis XV, between *fleur-de-lis* and rose, as they seemed to spring spontaneously from the virgin soil of the West, lying before them in immemorial calm.

The successive grades of Washington's preliminary education were thus being rapidly surmounted in the great University of the Wilderness, whose countless unknown creatures yielded up their knowledge to him, and spoke to, and taught him in tongues infinitely more efficient than those of the mere scholastic kind. Washington was always, in later years, regretting his ignorance of French, of the cultured training which his elder brothers Lawrence and Augustine had received at Appleby School in England, of the thousand and one polite accomplishments which the Virginians who matriculated in the Old World possessed in ample degree; but he need not have been ashamed of the real knowledge which he really and truly possessed,—not the knowledge which Master Hobby, the sexton convict, and Master Williams, the Wakefield schoolmaster, and the ex-Jesuit Marye (turned Huguenot), had imparted: the knowledge possessed by the young major and lieutenant-colonel now to be, was of a far finer character: he who knows not men is ignorant of the first principles of knowledge. It was possession of this masterful knowledge that made

stands, "interviewed" the French commandant and brought from him a specious message informing Dinwiddie of the French claims and aspirations.

On this expedition, Washington reveals himself as the pioneer diplomat of his time, conducting thorny negotiations in languages which he did not understand, and yet managing to explain himself to, and to understand, the forest Talleyrands and Metternichs by whom he was beset. The guile of the Indian nature was as intelligible to him as its distrust and superstition. Since 1656, the Washington clan had been studying Indian methods, Indian warfare, Indian customs and habits on the Northern Neck, and back in the picturesque Shenandoah wilderness where now and in neighbouring Pennsylvania nearly five hundred thousand Scotch-Irish had arrived, fresh from Irish Ulster; and this study, hereditary and personal, had not been lost on the impressionable soldier. It was in just such a school that the generals of the Civil War graduated—Lee and Grant and Jackson, Custer and Fitzhugh Lee, and, earlier, the soldier Presidents, Jackson and Taylor. American military history abounds in self-educated soldiers who, like Washington, got their training on the plains, in the backwoods, at the forks of rushing rivers where rude forts were built, and in the flying wigwam where the fugitive democracy of the woods held perennial council.

The heroic annals of New England history are no less full of these striking figures than the annals



of those softer climes which developed the Johnston, Marion, and Sumter.

The painstaking youth, who had bent painfully over his legal forms and documents, bills of sale, forms for wills, surveyor's diagrams and mathematical calculations, copying laboriously every misspelt word or misplaced capital, had not gone through that trial of patience, unaffected or inattentive. The patience, skill, practical knowledge, and useful information thus acquired in boyhood, now widened out into that deeper and finer knowledge which was to prove invaluable to his countrymen.

Hurrying back to Williamsburg, where the burgesses were in session, he hastily wrote out his journal in twenty-four hours, and informed the Governor of the plans and projects of the French at Fort Le Bœuf.

## CHAPTER V

### PROLOGUE TO A FOREST TRAGEDY

“MY inclinations,” wrote the young Washington to Colonel William Fitzhugh, “are strongly bent to arms”; and, in a letter to Dinwiddie, of about the same date, remarks: “I have a constitution hardy enough to encounter and undergo the most severe trials, and I flatter myself, resolution to face what any man durst, as shall be proved when it comes to the test.”

The test was close at hand.

The publication of Washington's Journal, now an exceedingly rare book, of almost priceless value, and its perusal by the governors of the neighbouring provinces, roused these sleepy commonwealths to the danger of a situation which threatened every moment to become more critical. The aggressions of the French, their advance down into the Ohio Valley—*La Belle Rivière* as they called it—had to be stopped. How could Virginia do it? Washington had described an admirable site for a fort, at the forks where the Monongahela and the Alleghany rush together to form the Ohio, in western Pennsylvania. A fort built here, he recommended, would constitute the very gateway of the West, the key to the situation, commanding and unlocking the vast

## Prologue to a Forest Tragedy 65

regions that no foot had yet trodden, except maybe that of the Jesuit, fur-trader, or Indian of the Miami or the Scioto. The French already held the other gateways to this Promised Land, at Fort Niagara, in western New York, and at Detroit and Green Bay; it was their evident intention to make the chain of exclusion complete, by establishing themselves at Fort Le Bœuf, or some stronghold not inferior in strength, that would shut the English out of this favoured territory, and confine them for ever to the ocean side of the continent, east of the Alleghanies.

Governor Dinwiddie was quick to grasp the wisdom of Washington's plan, and commissioned the immediate raising and equipment of two companies, of one hundred men each, one of which he was charged to command, while the other was entrusted to his lieutenant, William Trent (Benjamin Franklin's trading partner in west Pennsylvania). Trent was ordered to occupy and fortify the forks of the two rivers where Pittsburg now stands, and make the place impregnable against the roving bands of French, Canadians, and Indians, who had begun to infest the region, burying, wherever they went, leaden plates inscribed with the name and claims of his Most Christian Majesty, Louis XV, King of France.

War had not yet openly broken out between the two great powers, for the ink of the signatories to the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle was scarcely dry on the vellums; but a feeling of intense suspicion and irritability began to show itself, and, in the absence

of explicit information in these distant parts, no man knew at any given time what had happened across the ocean, or how lion and lily stood to each other. A universal covetousness possessed men's minds; greed of land, greed of gold, greed of everything within sight, held men's souls in its grip of steel; the boundless "desire of the eyes" and "pride of life" cast its spell over the eighteenth century and bewitched its wits.

Treaties crumbled at a touch, friable as incinerated paper; obligations were flung overboard like old shoes, worn-out and worthless; the smile of the diplomat supplanted the oath of the sovereign; and the cabinets of kings became subterranean laboratories of intrigue, where the sunlight never penetrated. The Watteau-ised civilisation of France, snickering and sneering behind its fans, had lost all vitality, and assumed the thousand affectations that smile at us out of the powder and paint and galantries of the Pompadours, the sentimentalities of Rousseau, and a little later, the Sorrows of Werther. England was in the throes of that tedious Georgian age which almost drove men mad with its dulness, and ultimately provoked the cynic smile of Walpole and Hogarth. Pope had ceased to lash the dunces with his poetic scourge, while in Gray's soul were just beginning to gather—symbolically enough—the exquisite strains of his "Elegy"—the tired, *blasé*, worn-out, senile courts of Europe, disgusted with themselves and their Thirty Years' War over matters no more important than "The Rape of a Lock,"

## Prologue to a Forest Tragedy 67

seemed to look wistfully over the Atlantic for relief, for a new "sensation," for something to shake them out of their stupor; and here, in this fresh, wild, unconventional, undiplomatic country, they found it, in a little while, in full measure.

The formation of the Ohio Company, for the opening and exploitation of the regions between the Lakes and the Mississippi, was a pivotal point in the diplomacy of the West. A London charter granted the company five hundred thousand acres of land and immense immunities and privileges of various sorts, on condition that it would, within a certain period, settle one hundred immigrant families within the region indicated, and thus fix the relations of the territory to Great Britain. This was, indeed, the incipency of the "North-West Territory" claim, and was fraught with mighty consequences. If the French got there first and affixed their leaden plates, so to speak, to the face of this territory, warning others away as diplomatic or aggressive trespassers, this vast and opulent region would, treaty or no treaty, fall into the hands of the powerful family whose alliance covered all France, Spain, Southern Italy, Mexico, and South America. Though separated three thousand miles by the sinuous zigzag of river, lake, and mountain, Canada and Louisiana, the head and the heel of Latin possessions in America, would soon be joined, and the thin and scattered chain of settlements, which connected them, would rivet themselves together in links that could not be broken, and a Chinese Wall of exclu-

sion be built up to dyke the inundation of English immigration, irresistibly flowing down the Alleghany slopes. Lawrence and Augustine Washington, brothers of George, were deeply interested in the Ohio Company; and here perhaps we catch a selfish motive—family interest—behind the glow of mere military ardour, actuating this young officer in his almost exuberant ambition to do and to dare, at this critical moment, for his native State. He makes curious entries in his day-book as he successively climbs the grades of captain, major, lieutenant-colonel, and colonel, indirectly showing that it could not have been the pay that attracted him to this service: as captain in 1754, 8 shillings per day; as major till March 20, 1754, 10 shillings per day; as lieutenant-colonel to June 1, 1754, 12 shillings, 6 pence; as colonel to September 1, 1754, 15 shillings per day; and, in 1755, as colonel of the Virginia regiment, 30 shillings a day.

These rapid promotions show incidentally, too, the worth and value of his services. In a year, he advanced through the entire gamut of subaltern positions, and when Braddock arrived in February, 1755, he would have been second only to the commanding general, had not his self-respect and natural pride caused him to resign his position, on an intimation from the Governor that a new Virginia regiment of 10 companies, with 100 men each, was to be formed, no one captain of which should out-rank another.

March 12<sup>th</sup> 1744/5

Geo Washington

Beginning this Eleventh Day of November 1749 Æt. 17

W<sup>th</sup> Washington

I am Sir. Y<sup>r</sup> Most Obed<sup>t</sup> & L<sup>y</sup> Serv. Æt. 25

Fort Loudoun  
10<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1757

G<sup>o</sup> Washington

Y<sup>r</sup> Most affect<sup>d</sup> Brother. Æt. 44

G<sup>o</sup> Washington

New York 29<sup>th</sup> of April 1776.

Mount Vernon  
December 10<sup>th</sup> 1799  
G<sup>o</sup> Washington

FOUR DAYS BEFORE HIS DEATH Æt. 67





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Washington's instructions from Dinwiddie read as follows:

"Having all things in readiness, you are to use all expedition in proceeding to the Fork of the Ohio with the men under command, and there you are to finish and complete in the best manner and as soon as you possibly can, the Fort which I expect is there already begun by the Ohio Company. You are to act on the defensive, but in case any attempts are made to obstruct the works or interrupt our settlements by any persons whatsoever, you are to restrain all such offenders and in case of resistance to make prisoners of, or kill and destroy them."

Washington, however, was not put in supreme command of even this little band of 200 or 300 Spartans, whose Leonidas was Colonel Joshua Fry, an Oxford graduate described by Dinwiddie as "a man of good sense and one of our best mathematicians," a man who had been associated with Peter Jefferson, father of the President, in the preparation of an esteemed map of Virginia, and who became, in 1754, colonel of the Virginia regiment. Washington was second in command.

The expedition failed; Colonel Fry died at Winchester in May, 1754; Trent's command was surrounded and captured by Contrecoeur, the French commander, at the Forks (then called Duquesne, in honour of the Marquis Duquesne, Governor-General of Canada). The supreme command devolved upon the young Virginian, now twenty-two years old.

The frightful difficulties of the situation—wan-

dering around the woods almost without food and ammunition, through pathless forests, over trackless mountains, across rivers difficult to ford, hewing roads through the living trees, thick as an embattled host on every side, the air filled with vague rumours of swarms of French and Indians, the absence of authentic news of any kind in the dense, dumb, endless woods, about which both forces floundered as about some Hyrcanian Bog or Slough of Despond: these difficulties may be best gathered from Washington's and Dinwiddie's own words:

"I set out with forty men before ten," reports Washington, "and [it] was from that time till near sunrise before we reached the Indians' camp, having marched in [a] small path, through a heavy rain, and night as dark as it is possible to conceive. We were frequently tumbling one over another, and often so lost, that fifteen or twenty minutes' search would not find the path again.

"When we came to the Half-King, I counselled with him, and got his assent to go hand-in-hand and strike the French. Accordingly, himself, Monacatoocha, and a few other Indians set out with us; and when we came to the place where the tracks were, the Half-King sent two Indians to follow their tracks, and discover their lodgement, which they did about half a mile from the road, in a very obscure place surrounded with rocks. I, thereupon, in conjunction with the Half-King and Monacatoocha, formed a disposition to attack them on all sides, which we accordingly did, and, after an engagement of about fifteen minutes, we killed ten, wounded one, and took twenty-one prisoners.

## Prologue to a Forest Tragedy 71

Among those that were killed was Monsieur Jumonville, the commander; principal officers taken is Monsieur Drouillon and Mons'r La Force, who your Honour has often heard me speak of as a bold enterprising man, and a person of great subtlety and cunning. With these are two cadets. These officers pretend they were coming on an embassy; but the absurdity of this pretext is too glaring, as your Honour will see by the Instructions and Summons enclosed. These instructions were to reconnoitre the country, roads, creeks, etc., to Potomack, which they were about to do. These enterprising men were purposely choose out to get intelligence, which they were to send back by some brisk despatches, with mention of the day that they were to serve the summons; which could be through no other view, than to get a sufficient reinforcement to fall upon us immediately after. This, with several other reasons, induced all the officers to believe firmly, that they were sent as spies, rather than any thing else, and has occasioned my sending them as prisoners, tho they expected or at least had some faint hope, of being continued as ambassadors. They, finding where we were encamped, instead of coming up in a publick manner, sought out one of the most secret retirements, fitter for a deserter than an ambassador to encamp in, stayed there two or 3 days, sent spies to reconnoitre our camp, as we are told, tho they deny it. Their whole body moved back near 2 miles, sent off two runners to acquaint Contrecoeur with our strength, and where we were encamped, etc. Now 36 men would almost have been a retinue for a princely ambassador, instead of a *petit*. Why did they, if their designs were open, stay so long within 5 miles of us, without delivering

his embassy, or acquainting me with it? His waiting could be with no other design, than to get [a] detachment to enforce the summons, as soon as it was given. They had no occasion to send out spies, for the name of ambassador is sacred among all nations; but it was by the track of these spies, that they were discovered, and we got intelligence of them. They would not have retired two miles back without delivering the summons, and sought a skulking-place (which, to do them justice, was done with great judgment), but for some special reason. Besides, the summons is so insolent, and savours so much of gascoigny, that if two men only had come openly to deliver it, it was too great indulgence to have sent them back.

“The sense of the Half-King on this subject is, that they have bad hearts, and that this is a mere pretence; they never designed to have come to us but in a hostile manner, and if we were so foolish as let them go again, he never would assist us in taking another of them. Besides, loosing La Force, I really think, would lead more to our disservice, than 50 other men, as he is a person whose active spirit leads him into all parleys, and brought him acquainted with all parts, add to this a perfect use of the Indian tongue, and ye influence with the Indians.

“He ingenuously enough confessed, that, as soon as he saw the commission and instructions, that he believed, and then said he expected some such tendency, tho he pretends to say he does not believe the commander had any other but a good design. In this engagement we had only one man killed and two or three wounded, among which was Lieutenant Waggener slightly,—a most miraculous escape, as our right wing

## Prologue to a Forest Tragedy 73

was much exposed to their fire and received it all. The Half-King received your Honour's speech very kind, but desired me to inform you, that he could not leave his people at this time, thinking them in great danger. He is now gone to the Crossing for their families, to bring to our camp; and desired I would send some men and horses to assist them up, which I have accordingly done; sent 30 men and upwards of twenty horses. He says, if your Honour has any thing to say, you may communicate by me, etc., and that, if you have a present for them, it may be kept to another occasion, after sending up some things for their immediate use. He has declared to [me he would] send these Frenchmen's scalps, with a hatchet, to all the nations of Indians in union with them, and did that very day give a hatchet, and a large belt of wampum, to a Delaware man to carry to Shingiss. He promised me to send down the river for all the Mingoes and Shawanese to our camp, where I expect him to-morrow with thirty or forty men, with their wives and children. To confirm what he has said here, he has sent your Honor a string of wampum.

"As these runners went off to the fort on Sunday last, I shall expect every hour to be attacked, and by unequal numbers, which I must withstand if there are five to one; or else I fear the consequence will be, that we shall lose the Indians, if we suffer ourselves to be drove back. I despatched an express immediately to Colonel Fry with this intelligence, desiring him to send reinforcements with all imaginable despatch.

"Your Honor may depend I will not be surprised, let them come at what hour they will; and this is as much as I can promise. But my best endeavours shall

not be wanting to deserve more. I doubt not, but if you hear I am beaten, but you will, at the same [time,] hear that we have done our duty, in fighting as long [as] there was a possibility of hope.

"I have sent Lieutenant West, accompanied with Mr. Splitdorph and a guard of 20 men, to conduct the prisoners in, and I believe the officers have acquainted him what answer to return your Honour. Monsieur La Force and Monsieur Drouillon beg to be recommended to your Honor's notice, and I have promised they will meet with all the favour due to imprisoned officers. I have show'd all the respect I could to them here, and have given some necessary cloathing, by which I have disfurnished myself; for, having brought no more than two or three shirts from Will's Creek, that we might be light, I was ill provided to furnish them. I am, etc.

"P. S. I have neither seen nor heard any particular account of the Twigtwees since I came on these waters. We have already begun a palisadoed fort, and hope to have it up to-morrow. I must beg leave to acquaint your Honour, that Captain Vanbraam and Ensign Peyrouny has behaved extremely well since they came out, and I hope will meet with your Honor's favor."<sup>1</sup>

This little skirmish was really the "cannon ball" whose discharge, as Voltaire said, "set Europe on fire," and was heard all over the world. The death of Jumonville led to Braddock, and Braddock led to Montcalm and Wolfe and the downfall of France in America in 1763, after seventy years of struggle.

<sup>1</sup> Ford, *Writings of George Washington*, vol. i, p. 82.

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Says Ford: " Meantime the garrison at Duquesne had received additions, and Coulon de Villiers, a brother of Jumonville, had arrived from Montreal with a large force of Indians." It was at once determined to "avenge the murder of Jumonville" and to attack the English whether found on soil claimed by the French or on territory that was English beyond any doubt. The party, under the command of Villiers, reached Red Stone Creek on June 30th, and, on July 2d, the camp at Gist's so recently abandoned by Washington. From the Indian scouts the position of the English was soon determined, and on the next day the two forces met. Washington had made a small trench for protection, but it proved of little service, as his men were exposed to a cross-fire from the French and Indians. What followed is best told in the language of Governor Dinwiddie:

"Immediately they [the French] appeared in sight of our camp, and fired at our people at a great distance, which did no harm. Our small forces were drawn up in good order to receive them before their entrenchments, but did not return their first fire, reserving it till they came nigher. The enemy advanced irregularly within 60 yards of our forces, and then made a second discharge, and observing they did not intend to attack them in open field, they retired within their trenches, and reserved their fire, thinking from their numbers they would force their trenches, but finding they made no attempt of this kind, the Colonel gave orders to our people to fire on the enemy, which

they did with great briskness, and the officers declare this engagement continued from 11 o'clock till 8 o'clock at night, they being without shelter, rainy weather, and their trenches to the knee in water, whereas the French were sheltered all round our camp by trees; from thence they galled our people all the time as above. About 8 o'clock at night the French called out to parley; our people mistrusting their sincerity, from their numbers and other advantages, refused. At last they desired [us] to send an officer that could speak French, and they gave their parole for his safe return to them, on which the Commander sent two officers to whom they gave their proposals. . . . From our few numbers and our bad situation, they were glad to accept them; otherways were determined to lose their lives rather than be taken prisoners. The next morning a party from the French came and took possession of our encampment, and our people marched off with colors flying and beat of drum; but there appeared a fresh party of 100 Indians to join the French, who galled our people much, and with difficulty were restrained from attacking them; however, they pilfered our people's baggage, and at the beginning of the engagement the French killed all the horses, cattle and live creatures they saw, so that our forces were obliged to carry off the wounded men on their backs to some distance from the place of the engagement, where they left them with a guard; the scarcity of provisions made them make quick marches to get among the inhabitants which was about 60 miles of bad road." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ford, *Writings of George Washington*, vol. i, p. 119.



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The capture of Colonel Washington and his little band by superior French forces at Fort Necessity, in midsummer of 1754, almost exactly a year before Braddock's defeat near the same place the following summer, so far from rousing the resentment of the burgesses, as one might have expected, drew from them the heartiest appreciation of Colonel Washington's heroism in holding out so long, and a vote of thanks for his gallant conduct.

In a famous postscript to a letter to his brother, describing Jumonville's death a few months before, Washington wrote:

"P. S. I fortunately escaped without any wound, for the right wing, where I stood, was exposed to and received all the enemy's fire, and it was the part where the man was killed, and the rest wounded. I heard the bullets whistle, and, believe me, there is something charming in the sound."

From the *London Magazine*, August, 1754.

"In the express, which Major Washington despatched on his preceding little victory (the skirmish with Jumonville), he concluded with these words,—*'I heard the bullets whistle, and, believe me, there is something charming in the sound.'* On hearing of this the King said sensibly,—*'He would not say so, if he had been used to hear many.'* However, this brave braggart learned to blush for his rhodomontade, and, desiring to serve General Braddock as aid-de-camp, acquitted himself nobly."

It was seldom, indeed, that the reticent Virginian broke into such rare hyperbole as this over the

charm of the whizzing bullet, whose music was to be henceforth the chief companion of his military and administrative life. The absurd charge brought by the French, that Washington had "assassinated" Jumonville in the skirmish preliminary to the surrender, was vigorously resented and absolutely refuted, by the Virginian in a detailed communication to the Governor.

*One* good purpose this first humiliation of Washington served: it rang through the colonies like an alarm-bell and aroused Pennsylvania, Maryland, New York, and Massachusetts to the need of immediate co-operation, combination, concentration of ways and means, and united resistance to the now overshadowing peril of the Western frontier. Boundary disputes were forgotten; lagging legislatures awoke to the extremity of the danger; contentions over rank and pay ceased for a moment; abundant means were voted by the people's representatives at Williamsburg, Philadelphia, Albany, and Boston, and aroused public sentiment flamed forth, like a sudden conflagration, in favour of quick and concentrated effort in the West.

France, at this time, had the reputation of being as irresistible on land as England was resistless at sea; the navy of the one, with its two hundred war-ships, might prance over the seas, but not over the measureless forests of America, while the 180,000 veterans of France, lineal descendants of the heroes who had served under Turenne and Vendôme, Prince Eugène and Marshal Saxe, might well in-

spire a dread that had no bounds, should any considerable number of them board the hundred warships of the French navy, the "ocean greyhounds" of the day — and leap over bounding waves from Brest and Rochefort to Quebec and Montreal.

And this was precisely what happened. Eighteen French warships with three thousand regulars started out of these harbours and made for the mouth of the St. Lawrence as fast as wind and waves could carry them. Almost simultaneously, an English fleet under Vice-Admiral Boscawen set sail in pursuit, to head off this formidable armada and destroy it off the coast of Newfoundland. Three French ships alone were captured, the rest escaping triumphantly out of the fog into the broad and hospitable jaws of the mighty river, which bore them easily up into the very heart of the continent.

Even in those days of slow-travelling Rumour, it was not long before the bad news from Virginia reached the Downing Street of the day, and created consternation there. An officer who flits fitfully across the pages of Franklin's *Autobiography* and Horace Walpole's correspondence — General Edward Braddock — attracted the attention of the Foreign Office, and was put in command of the 44th and 48th regiments, with orders to sail from Cork to Hampton Roads, without further loss of time. The regiments, accustomed to the ways of civilised European warfare with civilised foes, were loth enough to traverse the stormy seas in mid-winter, and march into the spectral forests of

the Alleghanies, to face the hideous Red Skins in their very dens. General Braddock himself left England with a heavy heart, weighed down with a strange presentiment.

Braddock was a Perthshire Scotchman, a singular mixture of rough honesty, insolence, ignorance, personal valour, and brutality,—a *Miles Gloriosus*, of the type graphically portrayed by the Roman comedian, yet touched with traits that served to enhance the profound pathos and paradox of his career.

He smiled derisively when Franklin, “the sublime of common sense,” told him of the dangers of Indian warfare, the possibilities of ambushes, and the wiliness of this aboriginal foe who, more like a bird of the air or a beast of the fields, flitted, wraithlike, among his forests as one of its beloved children, and appeared and disappeared with the swiftness of a dream.

The choleric Scotchman, unimaginative as he was, and unskilled in any form of warfare except that in which he had figured at Gibraltar, in the gilded manœuvres of the Coldstream Guards whom he joined as a lad of 15, in 1710, or in dancing attendance on the mistress whom Walpole describes, pooh-poohed the statements of the wise American, then Postmaster-General of Pennsylvania, and set him down, doubtless, as a Quaker poltroon. He disclosed to Franklin a veritable milkmaid’s dream, in the words of the sagacious autobiographer :

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“In conversation with him one day, he was giving me some account of his intended progress. ‘After taking Fort Duquesne,’ said he, ‘I am to proceed to Niagara; and, having taken that, to Frontenac, if the season will allow time, and I suppose it will; for Duquesne can hardly detain me above three or four days; and then I see nothing that can obstruct my march to Niagara.’

“Having before revolved in my mind,” continues Franklin, “the long line his army must make in their march by a very narrow road, to be cut for them through the woods and bushes, and also what I had read of a former defeat of fifteen hundred French, who invaded the Illinois country, I had conceived some doubts and some fears for the event of the campaign. But I ventured only to say, To be sure, Sir, if you arrive well before Duquesne, with these fine troops, so well-provided with artillery, the fort, though completely fortified, and assisted with a very strong garrison, can probably make but a short resistance. The only danger I apprehend of obstruction to your march, is from the ambuscades of the Indians, who, by constant practice, are dexterous in laying and executing them; and the slender line, near four miles long, which your army must make, may expose it to be attacked by surprise in its flanks, and to be cut like a thread into several pieces, which, from their distance, cannot come up in time to support each other.

“He smiled at my ignorance, and replied, ‘These savages may indeed be a formidable enemy to your raw American militia; but upon the King’s regular and disciplined troops, Sir, it is impossible they should make any impression.’ I was conscious of an impro-

priety in my disputing with a military man in matters of his profession, and said no more.

“ This General was, I think, a brave man, and might probably have made a figure as a good officer in some European war. But he had too much self-confidence, too high an opinion of the validity of regular troops, and too mean a one of both Americans and Indians. George Croghan, our Indian interpreter, joined him on his march with one hundred of those people, who might have been of great use to his army as guides and scouts, if he had treated them kindly; but he slighted and neglected them, and they gradually left him.”<sup>1</sup>

By February, 1755, “ the cruel, crawling waves ” had wafted the five hundred gallant Britishers from the soft, green pastures and shining Shannon of Ireland, to the beautiful silver expanse of Hampton Roads and the Potomac, where their doom awaited them.

All the elements of pity and terror, maintained by Aristotle to be the foundation of Tragedy, were here in abundance—reckless courage, personal gallantry, unquestioning confidence, high and invincible purpose to quell for ever the Gallic pretensions, and pluck the Bourbon lily up by the roots from places immemorially sacred to the Saxon rose.

Dinwiddie was charmed with the General, his fellow-countryman, and with his show of forcefulness and resource. A council of five governors—Sharpe of Maryland, Shirley of Massachusetts,

<sup>1</sup> Sparks, *Life of Franklin*, vol. i, p. 189.

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Delancy of New York, Morris of Pennsylvania, and Dinwiddie of Virginia, met at Alexandria to concert measures in harmony with the commander-in-chief, to crush the enemy in Acadia, at Crown Point, at Fort Niagara, and at Fort Duquesne.

The wildest and least winsome of these operations, those against Duquesne, fell naturally to the lot of Braddock, who now that they were about to begin, fell into a frame of furious petulance and impatience that no proper preparations had been made for them by the colonial governments; no horses or waggons were to be had, food for the soldiers was, so to speak, still growing in the green maize-fields around, or running wild in four-legged independence in the Virginia woods, while their six hundred pack-horses fed on the leaves of the trees. He abused all Americans, except the men of Massachusetts and of Virginia, and among the serenely stupid Friends, in their imperturbable obstinacy, found only Franklin to praise.

And, but for Franklin's assistance in procuring a hundred and fifty waggons and their accoutrements from the stubborn and penurious Germans and Quakers of his province, he could not have moved a step.

Here as elsewhere in this remarkable Revolution, Franklin and Washington emerge together, standing in a blaze of light, even at this early period, as the right and left arm, the battle-axe and the cleaver of the Revolutionary movement.

There was twenty-six years difference in their ages; Franklin was the kind of man that always seems born old, between whom and common sense there was a pre-established harmony, who infallibly takes the right view of things from the start, and once taken, never deserts it for more plausible or more fallacious views. Beneath his smile of benignity lurked a world of shrewdness that had at its beck and call an epigrammatic felicity of phrase, an aptitude for coining itself into axioms that became proverbs, and proverbs that wrote themselves, almost automatically, into the head-lines of copy-books, to be endlessly repeated in the myriad school-boy handwritings of the time. He was his own *Poor Richard's Almanac*, incarnate. Massachusetts, quick, keen, humorous, full of dry wit and intellectual virility—Hosea Biglow *in nascendo*—tingled in every vein, shed humorous philosophy over every discussion, illuminated every conversation with point and epigram. Brilliantly original in scientific research, endlessly inventive in the application of his knowledge to the common conveniences of life, Franklin opened his wise old child's eye on things around him as naively at eighty as he did at twenty-six, while the wit and sense of the generations before him seemed to concentrate themselves, and run down into a mould which was the incarnation of this new American man.

How different was Washington, in whom Virginia, with all its faults and nobilities, its high





BENJAMIN FRANKLIN IN 1779.

From an oil-painting in the possession of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.



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seriousness and lofty sense of duty, its martial ardour and generous, chivalrous ways, was as truly typified, as was the clever New England spirit clarified and concentrated in the printer-electrician, diplomat, and philosopher.

## CHAPTER VI

### IN THE TRAGICAL WOOD

**B**RADDOCK had heard of the fame of this fine, young colonel, not only at Williamsburg, but more probably in London drawing-rooms, where his gallantry had often been the subject of conversation. He was the one figure in all Virginia then, that the Scotch Commander could not afford to overlook, though he was surrounded by an imposing retinue of captains, of high officials like Sir John Sinclair and Sir Peter Halket, and functionaries, half military, half civilian, who hoped to share in the glories of this new invincible Armada.

He was immediately and most courteously invited to serve on General Braddock's staff, and to form one of his military family. The letters that passed between them are equally creditable to both sides :

“ Williamsburg, 2 March, 1755.

“ SIR,

“ The General having been informed that you expressed some desire to make the campaign, but that you declined it upon some disagreeableness that you thought might arise from the regulation of command, has ordered me to acquaint you, that he will be very glad of your company in his family, by which all inconveniences of that kind will be obviated.

"I shall think myself very happy to form an acquaintance with a person so universally esteemed, and shall use every opportunity of assuring you how much I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

"ROBERT ORME, Aid-de-camp."

"TO ROBERT ORME

"Mount Vernon, 15 March, 1755.

"SIR,

"I was not favored with your polite letter, of the 2d inst., until yesterday; acquainting me with the notice his Excellency, General Braddock, is pleased to honor me with, by kindly inviting me to become one of his family the ensuing campaign. It is true, Sir, that I have, ever since I declined my late command, expressed an inclination to serve the ensuing campaign as a volunteer; and this inclination is not a little increased, since it is likely to be conducted by a gentleman of the General's experience.

"But, besides this, and the laudable desire I may have to serve, with my best abilities, my King and country, I must be ingenuous enough to confess, that I am not a little biassed by selfish considerations. To explain, Sir, I wish earnestly to attain some knowledge in the military profession, and believing a more favorable opportunity cannot offer, than to serve under a gentleman of General Braddock's abilities and experience, it does, as you may reasonably suppose, not a little contribute to influence my choice. But, Sir, as I have taken the liberty to express my sentiments so freely, I shall beg your indulgence while I add, that the only bar, which can check me in the pursuit of this object, is the inconveniences that must

necessarily result from some proceedings which happened a little before the General's arrival, and which, in some measure, had abated the ardor of my desires, and determined me to lead a life of retirement, into which I was just entering, at no small expense, when your favour was presented to me.

"But, as I shall do myself the honor of waiting upon his Excellency, as soon as I hear of his arrival at Alexandria, (and would sooner, were I certain where to find him,) I shall decline saying any thing further on this head till then; begging you will be pleased to assure him, that I shall always retain a grateful sense of the favour with which he is pleased to honor me, and that I should have embraced this opportunity of writing to him, had I not recently addressed a congratulatory letter to him on his safe arrival in this country. I flatter myself you will favour me in making a communication of these sentiments.

"You do me a singular favour, in proposing an acquaintance. It cannot but be attended with the most flattering prospects of intimacy on my part, as you may already perceive, by the familiarity and freedom with which I now enter upon this correspondence; a freedom, which, even if it is disagreeable, you must excuse, as I may lay the blame of it at your door, for encouraging me to throw off that restraint, which otherwise might have been more obvious in my deportment on such an occasion.

"The hope of shortly seeing you will be an excuse for my not adding more, than that I shall endeavour to approve myself worthy of your friendship, and that I beg to be esteemed your most obedient servant." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ford, *Writings of George Washington*, vol. i, p. 141.

And so events moved on. Merrily had the leaping transport-ships sped over the crisping waves, in the keen January blasts, out of the picturesque river that flowed from the heart of Ireland, full of proud, gallant men, never dreaming of defeat, while naturally dreading an insidious foe. Merrily had they come to anchor in the spacious stretches of Hampton Water, which receives, as in a mighty bowl, the ample flood of the historic James, the very *cordium* of the ancient commonwealth; and many a famous talk had the two Scotchmen—Dinwiddie and Braddock—together, over the sunny Madeira and fuming Virginia posset-bowl, confidentially, concerning the details of the approaching campaign.

March passed, however,—April—May; the lovely Virginia spring came and went, mantled in bloom, filled with the exquisite scents and perfumes of a climate most perfectly mixed of heat and cold; the vivid vegetation of early summer had ripened into the matronly luxuriance of June, and still the army had not started from its place of assembly at Fort Cumberland, one hundred and forty miles from Fort Duquesne. In the primitive war-tactics of the day, no one, wrote Washington in a letter to Warner Lewis, knew anything of the strength of the French on the Ohio—"On the Ohio" being an expression as void of definiteness then, as "on the Amazon," or "on the Congo" would be to us now. The country swept away to the West and South in one illimitable ocean of leaves and limbs, so dense that the stars almost ceased to twinkle through them

at night, and the bewildered wanderer might try in vain, with rude astrolabe or magnetic needle, to fix his bearings. Fifty-two miles beyond Fort Cumberland lay Fort Necessity, fatally familiar to Washington, as the scene of his capitulation to the French only a few months before. No news, only the vast and appalling noises of the forest, crossed the forty leagues of distance that lay between the Monongahela and Will's Creek, where Braddock, infuriated at the delays and chafing like a chained lion, lay snorting with impatience; behind him, fair Virginia, wreathed in the peaceful smoke of endless calumet-pipes encircling the generous dinner-tables, full of fruits and fragrance and one hundred and fifty years of civilisation; before him, the savage wood that stretched apparently to infinity, peopled with dark forms and glittering eyes that watched every movement with the cunning and intensity of the hawk, the wolf, and the bear from which, half bird, half beast, they traced their fantastic descent.

About June the 9th they started, cleaving their way into the forest with three hundred axes, which hacked furiously at the tough stems of oak and chestnut, pine, spruce, and maple, levelling a road twelve feet wide, through and over underbrush for the passage of parks of artillery, heavy waggons, pack-horses, stores, ammunition, accoutrements, and hospital provisions, vindictively attacking tree-trunks, and disrupting the beautiful architecture of the forest as they hewed into its living aisles, and cleared a sinuous course through its echoing arches.



Travellers through this lovely region of the Union, to-day, still admire the magnificent remnants of wood and forest that join Pittsburg to Cumberland, and that still exist, like the pages of some splendid vellum from which vandals have ruthlessly torn the finest illustrations.

Bitterly did Washington, a few months later, complain of the slowness of this march. "In four days," he remarks, "we moved only twelve miles;" in ten days they had hewn their way to Little Meadows, thirty miles from the starting point and only one fourth of the toilsome way to Duquesne.

Parching midsummer was at hand when the snows of January (the month of their departure from Cork) had melted into a mere reminiscence.

A little before, the mountains of this Alleghany region had been white with the wondrous, wild rhododendron which cleaves the crevices of every rock, and covers their nakedness with a mantle of floral loveliness, vying with the blush-pink masses of the mountain-laurel, to make every cool covert of these woods, not carved into altars of emerald by moss and fern, beautiful as the Vale of Tempe.

Strategically, the critics now see that all this hewing and ploughing through the cruel wilderness was a monstrous blunder: Braddock, as Franklin advised, should have landed at Philadelphia, advanced westward on Duquesne through the thickly-peopled, fertile country of Pennsylvania, where the roads were good and provisions abundant, and finished his campaign triumphantly in six easy weeks.

Four whole months and half of another actually elapsed, however, before this dramatic game of hide-and-seek in the forest came to an end.

An eminent historian describes the scene as follows:

"Thus, foot by foot, they advanced into the waste of lonely mountains that divided the streams flowing to the Atlantic from those flowing to the Gulf of Mexico,—a realm of forests ancient as the world. The road was but twelve feet wide, and the line of march often extended four miles. It was like a thin, long, party-coloured snake, red, blue, and brown, trailing slowly through the depth of leaves, creeping round inaccessible heights, crawling over ridges, moving always in dampness and shadow, by rivulets and waterfalls, crags and chasms, gorges and shaggy steeps. In glimpses only, through jagged boughs and flickering leaves, did this wild primeval world reveal itself, with its dark green mountains, flecked with the morning mist, and its distant summits pencilled in dreamy blue. The army passed the main Alleghany, Meadow Mountain, and Great Savage Mountain, and traversed the funereal pine-forest, afterwards called the Shades of Death. No attempt was made to interrupt their march, though the commandant of Fort Duquesne had sent out parties for that purpose."<sup>1</sup>

In spite of the statement of this eminent writer, that Braddock did not rush headlong into an ambushade, we are forced to take Washington's own words, in his official report to Dinwiddie, that he did. Says Parkman:

<sup>1</sup> Parkman, *Montcalm and Wolfe*, vol. i, p. 205.

“Braddock has been charged with marching blindly into an ambuscade; but it was not so. There was no ambuscade; and had there been one, he would have found it. It is true that he did not reconnoitre the woods very far in advance of the head of the column; yet, with this exception, he made elaborate dispositions to prevent surprise. Several guides, with six Virginian light horsemen, led the way. Then, a musket-shot behind, came the vanguard; then three hundred soldiers under Gage; then a large body of axe-men, under Sir John Sinclair, to open the road; then two cannon with tumbrils and tool-waggon; and lastly the rear-guard, closing the line, while flanking-parties ranged the woods on both sides. This was the advance-column. The main body followed with little or no interval. The artillery and waggon moved along the road, and the troops filed through the woods close on either hand. Numerous flanking-parties were thrown out a hundred yards and more to right and left; while, in the space between them and the marching column, the pack horses and cattle, with their drivers, made their way painfully among the trees and thickets; since, had they been allowed to follow the road, the line of march would have been too long for mutual support. A body of regulars and provincials brought up the rear.”<sup>1</sup>

Washington had the best means of knowing what actually happened, being very near to Braddock, and he says explicitly to the Governor:

“When we came to the place [Frazier’s, 7 miles

<sup>1</sup> Parkman, *Montcalm and Wolfe*, vol. i, p. 214.

from Duquesne], we were attacked (very unexpectedly) by about 300 French and Indians."

In the number alone he was mistaken. There were 900 French, Canadians, Indians, and half-breeds—Braddock had started with 2200 men, among whom were nine companies of Virginians, of fifty or more men each, whose blue uniforms and provincial ways excited the derision of the scarlet-coated regulars, fresh from their European laurels. The number had somehow dwindled to 1300 (according to Washington), and these, plunging ignorantly into the all-swallowing wilderness, blundered recklessly on without ever dreaming of sending out scouts or skirmishers. The Virginians were fully aware of the dangers of the movement, for one hundred and fifty years of Indian warfare had accustomed them to the subtlety of this almost immaterial foe, who appeared and disappeared as by the wand of an enchanter, taught from immemorial ages in the ways of the woods, finding in every spreading tree a fortress, every tree-trunk a half-human, ever sympathising friend, using the prodigious fertility of the forest as their commissariat, sharpened in every sense to an almost superhuman acuteness of sight and hearing. The Redmen were near enough to the animal kingdom to partake of its finest qualities of sense, qualities acquired by thousands of years of friction and contact with the all-comprehending Mother Nature around, while their inclusion in the kingdom of men had, through the same thousands

of years, wrought out a wondrous brightness of intellect, and intelligence of a kind so self-developed and original as to resemble that of elves and goblins, swarming out of the bowels of the earth, with unnatural knowledge.

Braddock's mistreatment of these apparently simple people, the Iroquois, the most highly gifted of all American Indians,—“he treated us like dogs,” as explained one of their number,—wrought his ruin.

The reverie of the undying forest was now broken by a deathless scene.

“I cannot describe the horrors of that scene,” wrote Lieutenant Leslie of the 44th, three weeks later, “no pen could do it. The yell of the Indians is fresh on my ear, and the terrific sound will haunt me to the hour of my dissolution.”

This yell came from 900 throats, multiplied to 9000 or perhaps 90,000, by the sinister reverberation of the midsummer wildwood, whose gruesome recesses acted as sounding-boards, and shot forth a hundred variations of the harsh and thunderous nymph Echo, whose silent realm had been invaded. It seemed, indeed, as if the wrath of the great god Pan himself had been roused to fury, and all the powers of the raging underworld of myth and fairy had suddenly been let loose, to swarm upward in invisible wrath and might in defence of their forest children.

The trees turned to pillars of flame; the depths of the sombre Alleghanies became livid with smoke.

A thousand gallant Englishmen and Virginians

lay like stricken deer, pierced with bullets, tomahawked, scalped, in every attitude that writhing agony could take, blanched, bloody, lifeless, strewn for miles in scarlet horror along the road which had been the magnet of their destruction, a road which for them had led straight into the jaws of death.

Only twenty-three out of eighty-six officers escaped a scene which, in the energy of its mad despair, might beggar the powers of Edgar Allan Poe to describe in another "Masque of the Red Death." Platoon shot down platoon in the blind frenzy of panic, and the woods sang with the whirlwind of flying bullets that murdered, indiscriminately, friend and foe. Braddock, like Stonewall Jackson, was thought by some to have been shot by one of his own men. A wild rush backward through the fatal woods was made by the three hundred or four hundred survivors, while Washington, ill and weakened by disease, almost heart-broken in mind, lingered long enough to bury the misguided Braddock in the road, where fugitive feet and flying waggons obliterated every trace of the burial-place from the sight of the vindictive savages.

But the craven cowards were pursued by phantom fears. No Indian followed. Impelled by resistless terror, the remnant fled on and on, the wretched Dunbar at their head, and hardly stopped till they had reached Philadelphia; while Franklin relates, in a most touching passage, how the dying Braddock praised the brave Virginians almost with his

last breath, and expired murmuring: "The next time we shall know how to meet them."

Ages before, at the very beginning of the Christian era, this same most memorable tragedy had been enacted on German soil, with Roman soldiers and imperial eagles and the grandiose might of the City of the Seven Hills behind it, and all the antique imperial world as spectators. A grey-haired Cæsar, whose exquisite lineaments have come down in the chiselled beauty of the Young Augustus, stood in his Roman palace and, gazing wistfully towards Germany, wrung his hands and cried: "O Varus, Varus, give me back my legions!"

For the legionaries of Rome, advancing incautiously into the awful solitudes of the Teutoburger Forest, in the wildwoods of prehistoric Germany, were surrounded and annihilated by Arminius, the champion of the wild, young, fresh "Germany" that had grown up, like the valiant Iroquois, almost unnoticed in the dense forests of Westphalia, and burst down on the Romans with the fury of a whirlwind.

"O Varus, Varus, give me back my legions!"

"The sea washes away all human ills," sang Euripides, pathetically, ages ago, as he remembered what it had obliterated for Hellas.

The Forest is also a Sea beneath which, not the navies but the armies of the world have sunk, entombed—obliterated—forgotten.

Out of the agony of that time, four letters of

Washington have reached us, like leaves of that fateful wood blown to us by the feeble breath of the dying. They give us the most authentic, first-hand story of the "Battle of the Monongahela" as he calls it, and deserve quoting in their fulness:

TO GOVERNOR DINWIDDIE

"Fort Cumberland, 18 July, 1755.

"HONBL. SIR,

"As I am favored with an opportunity, I should think myself inexcusable was I to omit giving you some account of our late Engagement with the French on the Monongahela, the 9th instant.

"We continued our march from Fort Cumberland to Frazier's (which is within 7 miles of Duquesne) without meeting any extraordinary event, having only a straggler or two picked up by the French Indians. When we came to this place, we were attacked (very unexpectedly) by about three hundred French and Indians. Our numbers consisted of about Thirteen hundred well armed men, chiefly Regulars, who were immediately struck with such an inconceivable panick, that nothing but confusion and disobedience of orders prevailed among them. The officers, in general, behaved with incomparable bravery, for which they greatly suffered, there being near 60 killed and wounded—a large proportion, out of the number we had!

"The Virginia companies behaved like men and died like soldiers; for I believe out of three companies that were on the ground that day scarce thirty were left alive. Capt. Peyronney and all his officers, down to a corporal, were killed; Captn. Polson had almost



as hard a fate, for only one of his escaped. In short, the dastardly behaviour of the Regular troops (so-called) exposed those who were inclined to do their duty to almost certain death; and, at length, in despite of every effort to the contrary, broke and ran as sheep before hounds, leaving the artillery, ammunition, provisions, baggage, and, in short, everything a prey to the enemy. And when we endeavoured to rally them, in hopes of regaining the ground and what we had left upon it, it was with as little success as if we had attempted to have stopped the wild bears of the mountains, or rivulets with our feet; for they would break by, in despite of every effort that could be made to prevent it.

“The General was wounded in the shoulder and breast, of which he died three days after; his two aids-de-camp were both wounded, but are in a fair way of recovery; Colo. Burton and Sir John St. Clair are also wounded, and I hope will get over it; Sir Peter Halket, with many other brave officers, were killed in the field. It is supposed, that we had three hundred or more killed; about that number we brought off wounded, and it is conjectured (I believe with much truth) that two thirds of both received their shot from our own cowardly Regulars, who gathered themselves into a body, contrary to orders, ten or twelve deep, would then level, fire and shoot down the men before them.

“I tremble at the consequences that this defeat may have upon our back settlers, who, I suppose, will all leave their habitations unless there are proper measures taken for their security.

“Colo. Dunbar, who commands at present, intends;

as soon as his men are recruited at this place, to continue his march to Philadelphia for winter quarters: consequently there will be no men left here, unless it is the shattered remains of the Virginia troops, who are totally inadequate to the protection of the frontiers.”<sup>1</sup>

“TO JOHN A. WASHINGTON

“Fort Cumberland, 18 July, 1755.

“DEAR BROTHER,

“As I have heard, since my arrival at this place, a circumstantial account of my death and dying speech, I take this early opportunity of contradicting the first, and of assuring you, that I have not as yet composed the latter. But, by the all-powerful dispensations of Providence, I have been protected beyond all human probability and expectation; for I had four bullets through my coat, and two horses shot under me, yet escaped unhurt, altho’ death was levelling my companions on every side of me!

“We have been most scandalously beaten by a trifling body of men, but fatigue and want of time will prevent me from giving you any of the details, until I have the happiness of seeing you at Mount Vernon, which I now most ardently wish for, since we are drove in thus far. A weak and feeble state of health obliges me to halt here for two or three days, to recover a little strength, that I may thereby be enabled to proceed homewards with more ease. You may expect to see me there on Saturday or Sunday se’-night, which is as soon as I can well be down, as I shall take my Bullsken Plantations in my way.

• <sup>1</sup> Ford, *Writings of George Washington*, vol. i, p. 173

Pray give my compliments to all my friends. I am, dear Jack, your most affectionate brother."

"TO ROBERT JACKSON

"Mount Vernon, 2 August, 1755.

"DEAR SIR,

"I must acknowledge you had great reason to be terrified with the first accounts, that were given of our unhappy defeat; and, I must own, I was not a little surprised to find, that Governor Innes was the means of alarming the country with a report so extraordinary, without having better confirmation of the truth, than the story of an affrighted wagoner!

"It is true, we have been beaten, shamefully beaten, by a handful of men, who only intended to molest and disturb our march. Victory was their *smallest* expectation. But see the wondrous *works* of Providence, the uncertainty of human things! *We*, but a few moments before, believed our numbers almost equal to the Canadian force; *they*, *only* expected to annoy *us*. Yet, contrary to all expectation and human probability, and even to the common course of things, we were totally defeated, sustained the loss of every thing, which they have got, are enriched by it, and accommodated by them. This, as you observe, must be an affecting story to the colony, and will, no doubt, license the tongues of people to censure those, whom they think most blamable; which, by the by, often falls very wrongfully. I join very heartily with you in believing, that when this story comes to be related in future annals, it will meet with unbelief and indignation, for had I not been witness to the fact on that fatal day, I should scarce have given credit to it even *now*.

“Whenever it suits you to come into Fairfax, I hope you will make your home at Mount Vernon. Please to give my compliments to all inquiring friends. I assure you, nothing could have added more to the satisfaction of my safe return, than hearing of the friendly concern that has been expressed on my supposed death. I am, etc.”



GENERAL ISRAEL PUTNAM.

From the painting by H. I. Thompson, in the State House, Hartford, Conn.



## CHAPTER VII

### THE WIDOW CUSTIS

"She loved me for the dangers I had pass'd;  
And I loved her, that she did pity them.  
This only is the witchcraft I have used;  
Here comes the lady, let her witness it."

OTHELLO.

NEVER had History indeed rung down the curtain on a more dismal tragedy, yet no historian has failed to plant a requiem willow over the grave of the unfortunate Braddock. For a moment he appears jauntily on the edge of the Eastern horizon, in January, 1755, leaps lightly over the peccant Atlantic, as if scorning to touch it with loitering feet, gathers a brief and brilliant haze of glory about himself in garrulous Virginia, as he boastfully plans his campaign, stalks up and down the narrow colonial stage like a scarlet flamingo, then starts into the inexorable woods, never to return. Oblivion, the tireless swallower of mushroom reputations, has tried in vain to swallow him; it sticks in the throat of Time, a gigantic morsel of folly that cannot be swallowed.

In this prelude to his life's work, Washington suffered a second shock of humiliation, which was to clothe his nerves in steel against all possible disaster, and invest him, as the "spirit-protected

man," in a breastplate which no after-misfortune could penetrate.

Franklin sagaciously remarked, that Braddock's defeat dealt a deadly blow at the reputations of the British regulars for invincible prowess, and opened the eyes of the Americans to the weakness of the contention that they *were* invincible.

The spot where Siegfried was vulnerable had been discovered!

Meanwhile, Washington had strong and appreciative friends among the burgesses, who soon understood the situation, and secured for him the appointment of colonel of the sixteen new companies to be raised, together with a grant of £40,000 for their maintenance, and a purse of remuneration for each officer and private in the late unfortunate expedition. He himself received £300. Recruiting offices were opened at Fredericksburg, Alexandria, and Winchester, and the momentary stupor and amazement of the colony began to clear away.

It would be a matter of almost infinite, yet trivial and distressing, detail, to follow Washington in his voluminous correspondence with Governor Dinwiddie, Speaker Robinson, and Lord Loudon during the next two or three years. The endless small vexations of frontier life—drunkenness of officers, desertions of troops, insufficiency of pay and of ammunition, passionate appeals to the Governor and burgesses for help, for redress of grievances, for even bread and meat and powder—fill these letters, which are written with a sustained



clearness, cogency, and vigour, that reflect ~~high~~<sup>high</sup> credit on Washington as a master of direct and simple English. At this time, he had no secretary: all these letters are presumably autographic, and all show a circumstantial mastery of every detail of the service. He was, truly, fast becoming proficient in that forest- and - frontier university, in which other great Americans were to rival or to follow him—General Israel Putnam, Sir William Johnson, General Sam Houston, Lewis, Clark, Daniel Morgan, and a hundred frontier-bred heroes of the border “in the brave old days of ’76.” These letters read with a fluency and power, in which the heart-throbs of the young commander—now twenty-four—are still distinguishable.

In May, 1756, war was formally declared against France, whose people Washington, in one of these letters—for once casting off his habitual reserve—denounces as “barbarians.” Their barbarous scalping-parties turned the beautiful Vale of the Shenandoah, the upper reaches of the Potomac, the luxuriant mountains of western Pennsylvania, and the fern- and laurel-clad gorges of the Alleghanies into a pandemonium of blood, starvation, and murder. One decisive blow struck at Fort Duquesne, now nearly deserted, in consequence of the withdrawal of its garrison for the defence of Fort Niagara and Crown Point, would have brought the frightful turmoil to an end. But a civilian agent of the Crown—one Atkin—had been put over Washington’s head. Lord Loudon preferred

to direct operations against the Indians from Philadelphia and New York, and things in Virginia were left abundantly to themselves.

The paper on which Washington writes fairly burns with his supplications, prayers, entreaties, almost tears, to Dinwiddie for help, for substantial recognition of the services of the colonial militia, for the "tools" to erect the chain of forts, now contemplated, along a frontier three hundred and fifty miles in length, almost daily punctuated with funeral pyres, murdering parties, conflagrations, pillaging, cruelties and tortures of every description.

Even at this early period, Washington's abhorrence of the common military vices of profanity and gambling crops out in letters like the following:

"This extract from his *Orderly Book*, issued in general orders by the Commander two days after he reached Fort Cumberland, will show that he enforced rigid rules of discipline:—

"Col. Washington has observed, that the men of his regiment are very profane and reprobate. He takes this opportunity of informing them of his great displeasure at such practices, and assures them, if they do not leave them off, they shall be severely punished. The officers are desired, if they hear any man swear, or make use of an oath or execration, to order the offender twenty-five lashes immediately, without a court-martial. For the second offence, they will be more severely punished." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ford, *Writings of George Washington*, vol. i, p. 296, note.

“ TO THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF BURGESSES

“ December, 1756.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ It gave me infinite concern to hear by several letters, that the Assembly are incensed against the Virginia Regiment; and think they have cause to accuse the officers of all inordinate vices; but more especially of drunkenness and profanity! How far any *one* individual may have subjected himself to such reflections, I will not pretend to determine, but this I am certain of; and can with the highest safety call my conscience, my God! and (what I suppose will still be a more demonstrable proof, at least in the eye of the World) the Orders and Instructions which I have given, to evince the purity of my own intentions and to show on the one hand, that my incessant endeavours have been directed to discountenance Gaming, drinking, swearing, and other vices, with which all camps too much abound: while on the other, I have used every expedient to inspire a laudable emulation in the officers, and an unerring exercise of Duty in the Soldiers. How far I may have mistaken the means to attain so salutary an end behooves not me to determine: But this I presume to say, that a man's intentions should be allowed in some respects to plead for his actions. I have been more explicit Sir, on this head than I otherwise shou'd, because I find that my own character must of necessity be involved in the general censure, for which reason I can not help observing, that if the country think they have cause to condemn my conduct, and have a person in view that will act; that *he* may do. But who will endeavour to act more for her Interests than I have done?

It will give me the greatest pleasure to resign a command which I solemnly declare I accepted against my will." <sup>1</sup>

Out of the passion and terror of this broken time the following letter glows with a sullen fire :

“ TO GOVERNOR DINWIDDIE

“ Winchester, 22 April, 1756.

“ HONBLE. SIR,

“ This encloses several letters, and the minutes of a council of war, which was held upon the receipt of them. Your Honour may see to what unhappy straits the distressed inhabitants as well as I, am reduced. I am too little acquainted, Sir, with pathetic language, to attempt a description of the people's distresses, though I have a generous soul, sensible of wrongs, and swelling for redress. But what can I do? If bleeding, dying! would glut their insatiate revenge, I would be a willing offering to savage fury, and die by inches to save a people! I *see* their situation, know their danger, and participate their sufferings, without having it in my power to give them further relief, than uncertain promises. In short, I see inevitable destruction in so clear a light, that, unless vigorous measures are taken by the Assembly, and speedy assistance sent from below, the poor inhabitants that are now in forts, must unavoidably fall, while the remainder of the country are flying before the barbarous foe. In fine, the melancholy situation of the people, the little prospect of assistance, the gross and scandalous abuses cast upon the officers in general,

<sup>1</sup> Ford, *Writings of George Washington*, vol. i, pp. 406-407.

which is reflecting upon me in particular, for suffering misconducts of such extraordinary kinds, and the distant prospects, if any, that I can see, of gaining honor and reputation in the service, are motives which cause me to lament the hour, that gave me a commission, and would induce me, at any other time than this of imminent danger, to resign without one hesitating moment, a command, which I never expect to reap either honor or benefit from; but, on the contrary, have almost an absolute certainty of incurring displeasure below, while the murder of poor innocent babes and helpless families may be laid to my account here!

“The supplicating tears of the women, and moving petitions from the men, melt me into such deadly sorrow, that I solemnly declare, if I know my own mind, I could offer myself a willing sacrifice to the butchering enemy, provided that would contribute to the people’s ease.”<sup>1</sup>

“The melancholy condition of our distressed frontier,” is the burden of these mid-century letters, when Virginia on the west was girdled with fire, “the woods alive with Indians” writes the Colonel, “prowling like wolves”; “Indians alone are a match for Indians”; 500 of them enlisted by the Americans would be equal to 5000 regulars. The devilish atrocities of the hour forced the Virginia Assembly to offer from fifteen to thirty pounds for each tawny scalp sent in to a frontier camp.

Human foxes, squirrels, panthers, these woodland creatures, to parallel whom, one is thrown upon

• <sup>1</sup>Ford, *Writings of George Washington*, vol. i, p. 248.

the antique myth-world of Greece, had been sharpened by immemorial familiarity with the woods into almost superhuman intelligence, endowed with the profoundest knowledge of woodcraft, dusky Mercurys of the forest with winged feet, web-footed when it came to crossing water, protectively coloured among the indistinguishable shades of glade and gorge, the crowning presence in a vast sylvan region, boundless as the continent itself, in which they seemed to occupy the apex of a fantastic animal and vegetable world, and to rule over it supremely, by reason both of first possession and instinctive cunning.

Fanciful as Undine, in the way in which they appeared and disappeared in the ocean of leaves, their combinations and dissolutions, alliances and disintegrations, dependent upon a changeful world of symbolisms, in which belts of wampum and calumets of peace, scalps and hatchets played a strange and solemn part, were hardly more binding than alliances of wasps, or clouds of birds, as they appear to us in the comedies of Aristophanes; and yet, so formidable were they even in their momentary harmonies, that the literature of early America is fairly resonant with their presence, and the white man was forced to confess that, here in the new world, he had come upon a new species, self-developed, self-poised, owing little to the white man, borrowing less from him except his vices, armies of "brownies" who rose from their subterranean recesses without warning, inflicted a deadly blow, and

then melted like the mist into the dark and dangerous mountains.

Washington clearly understood the nature of these antagonists, and his letters are full of references to their wily and treacherous ways.

The Indians on their side faithfully appreciated his insight, by dubbing him in their tongue, "Conotocarius," a "Destroyer of Cities," a name which had been given in earlier times to his ancestor, Colonel John Washington of the Northern Neck.

"Washington," writes Colonel Fairfax at this time, "is the toast of every table"; and Dinwiddie, corresponding with General Abercrombie in England, went into particulars:

"As we are told the Earl of Loudon is to raise three regiments on this continent, on the British establishment, I dearn't venture to trouble him immediately on his arrival with any recommendations; but, good Sir, give me leave to pray your interest with his Lordship in favor of Colonel George Washington, who, I will venture to say, is a very deserving gentleman, and has from the beginning commanded the forces of this dominion. General Braddock had so high an esteem for his merit, that he made him one of his aid-de-camps, and, if he had survived, I believe he would have provided handsomely for him in the regulars. He is a person much beloved here, and he has gone through many hardships in the service, and I really think he has great merit, and believe he can raise more men here, than any one present that I know. If his Lordship will be so kind as to promote

him in the British establishment, I think he will answer my recommendation.”<sup>1</sup>

About the same time, Dinwiddie sent an interesting census of Virginia to the London Board of Trade, in which he stated that the population was about 300,000, including 120,000 blacks. Of this number, 35,000 were subject to militia duty, or a payment of ten pounds exemption tax; and yet so great was the dearth of men, or the antagonism to frontier service, that the one cry of Washington's letters now, piercing through his other cries for meat, money, bread, powder, is “men,” “men,” “men.”

In January, 1758, to the relief of all apparently, Dinwiddie departed for London, pursued by the following benediction of Speaker Robinson in a private letter to Washington:

“We have not yet heard who is to succeed him [Dinwiddie]. God grant it may be somebody better acquainted with the unhappy business we have in hand, and who, by his conduct and counsel, may dispel the cloud now hanging over this distressed country. Till that event, I beg, my dear friend, that you will bear, so far as a man of honor ought, the discouragements and slights you have too often met with, and continue to serve your country, as I am convinced you have always hitherto done, in the best manner you can with the small assistance afforded you.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ford, *Writings of George Washington*, vol. i, p. 284, note.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 510, note.



Two years and a half had now passed since that mournful midsummer of 1755, when Braddock, with his 1300 noble fellows, had started for that "hole of barbarians," Fort Duquesne, as Washington called it, and, in the funereal wood, still lay, doubtless, relics of the 1000 carcasses barbarously left there, after Washington had personally read the majestic burial service of the Book of Common Prayer over his dead chief; and still things wagged on in that endless, beguiling, inconsequent, colonial way, which never seemed to bring anything to an end, never ended in real peace or real war, a skirmishing, scared, witless, toothless time, without teeth or talons to clutch any policy, hot or cold, absolutely inane in its linked listlessness and futility long drawn out.

Washington, endowed originally with a splendid constitution, inured to hardships by innumerable fatigues and privations, nerve-proof against criticism, insinuation, even the scribbling fluency of Dinwiddie,—at last unnerved, Washington fell dangerously ill of dysentery and camp-fever, the seeds of which had sullenly lurked in his system since he had been borne in a litter, just before Braddock's defeat.

For four months he hung between life and death at Mount Vernon, whither he had gone for convalescence; and here, or not far from here, in a little while, he was to experience one of those great changes in fortune which come to men of his class and character only once in a lifetime.

All of a sudden out of the gloom and anguish of these perturbed times, without previous warning, falls the following note, as delicately thrilling in its way as one of those musical notes that flow spontaneously from the throat of Spring:

“TO MRS. MARTHA CUSTIS

“July 20, 1758.

“We have begun our march for the Ohio. A courier is starting for Williamsburg, and I embrace the opportunity to send a few words to one whose life is now inseparable from mine. Since that happy hour when we made our pledges to each other, my thoughts have been continually going to you as another Self. That an all-powerful Providence may keep us both in safety is the prayer of your ever faithful and affectionate friend.”<sup>1</sup>

The strong, controlled passion of a soul which strove in vain to spend itself on men and affairs, now, at twenty-six, turned its ardour towards a lovely woman who was, like the gallant colonel himself, a “consummate flower” of the Virginia planter commonwealth. One cannot imagine this stately young warrior selecting for himself, out of that wealth of jewelled women around him, one radiantly beautiful, or markedly intellectual, or pungent, airy, witty—a Ninon, a Lady Mary, or a De Staël—but simply a lovely, Virginia woman of the eighteenth century, rich in the possession of all the homelike and housewifely charms, rich in the heart

<sup>1</sup> Ford, *Writings of George Washington*, vol. ii, p. 53.



BATTLE OF PRINCETON—DEATH OF MERCER.  
From the painting by Col. John Trumbull.



and soul, rather than in the intellect and understanding, an ideal of the gentler womanhood that preceded the era of the Amazon, and consecrated itself altogether to the sacred offices of friendship.

Of such was Martha Dandridge.

She was a perfect (or, if you will, an imperfect) type of that matronly Virginian woman, of whom suggestive images hung in every ripening fruit-orchard of the commonwealth; there was no savour of the nymph or the milkmaid, of the Lady Godiva, or of the impassioned Chimène species about her. She had grown up in that old Virginia, gracious, charming, high-spirited, without the "grand air" of the Evelyn Byrds, or the ladies that cast ineffable glances from the canvases of Lely or Sir Godfrey, yet mistress of far more than merely this: faithful to the daily task, tenacious as De Sévigné to a friendship once formed, it is perhaps fortunate that she, of all the scribbling women then living, scribbled least of what lay on her breast, and has floated on down to us a benign presence, a perfume, a perfect memory, rather than an impassioned Héloïse, over whom generations have wept. Just the wife for Washington, one cannot help thinking, for the strenuous young man of action, the hero absorbed by a thousand struggles, the dreamer of a thousand dreams for King and commonwealth, the incarnation of an energy that soon realised itself on a hundred fields, yet needed nothing so much as a beloved companion of his heart to share his glories and his

dangers, his secret thoughts and his most sacred confidences.

The union of George and Martha Washington was, indeed, like that marriage of perfect words to noble music, so melodiously sung by the laureate of a later generation.

She was a sweet, sane, whole-souled, wholesome Virginia lady, skilled in the gracious household accomplishments of the time, fond of all the innocent gaieties and amusements fashionable in the eighteenth century, yet a slave to none, wise in the counsels of the household, conscious of her lofty position, yet never presuming upon it, an early riser, an indefatigable *tricoteuse* when the needs of the Revolutionary soldiers became known, no saint or St. Cecilia of the harpsichord, but a simple, loving, high-bred, faithful woman, who in her span of seventy-one years lived to be twice a widow. She was from May to February older than Washington, while Colonel Daniel Parke Custis, her first husband, was twenty years older than herself. Four children—Martha, Daniel, John Parke, and a girl dying in infancy—were the fruit of the Custis union, while, in an oft quoted epigram, "Providence denied Washington children that he might be the father of the whole country."

This distant corner of the English dominions then suffered a dearth of teachers for women, yet Virginia was at this very time full of the women who became mothers of the famous statesmen, publicists, judges, generals, and governors of the

commonwealth during the Revolution, women whose potential genius was as great as that of the women of Greece, in the age that preceded the golden cycle of Pericles.

Ten years lay between Martha Dandridge's two marriages: at seventeen she had become the bride of Daniel Parke Custis, who was thirty-seven; at twenty-six when she had been but a few months a widow, George Washington claimed her as his bride.

Her grandson, two generations later, wrote the following pretty story of the courtship:

"It was in 1758, that an officer, attired in a military undress, and attended by a body-servant, tall and *militaire* as his chief, crossed the ferry called Williams's, over the Pamunkey, a branch of the York River. On the boat touching the southern or New Kent side, the soldier's progress was arrested by one of those personages, who give the beau ideal of the Virginia gentleman of the old régime, the very soul of kindness and hospitality. It was in vain the soldier urged his business at Williamsburg, important communications to the Governor, etc. Mr. Chamberlayne, on whose domain the *militaire* had just landed, would hear of no excuse. Colonel Washington (for the soldier was he) was a name and character so dear to all the Virginians, that his passing by one of the old castles of the commonwealth, without calling and partaking of the hospitalities of the host, was entirely out of the question. The colonel, however, did not surrender at discretion, but stoutly maintained his ground, till Chamberlayne bringing up his reserve,

in the intimation that he would introduce his friend to a young and charming widow, then beneath his roof, the soldier capitulated, on condition that he should dine, 'only dine,' and then, by pressing his charger and borrowing of the night, he would reach Williamsburg before his excellency could shake off his morning slumbers. Orders were accordingly issued to Bishop, the Colonel's body-servant and faithful follower, who, together with the fine English charger, had been bequeathed by the dying Braddock to Major Washington, on the famed and fatal field of the Monongahela. Bishop, bred in the school of European discipline, raised his hand to his cap, as much as to say, 'Your honour's orders shall be obeyed.'

"The Colonel now proceeded to the mansion, and was introduced to various guests (for when was a Virginian domicile of the olden time without guests?), and above all, to the charming widow. Tradition relates that they were mutually pleased on this their first interview, nor is it remarkable; they were of an age when impressions are strongest. The lady was fair to behold, of fascinating manners, and splendidly endowed with wordly benefits. The hero, fresh from his early fields, redolent of fame, and with a form on which 'every god did seem to set his seal, to give the world assurance of a man.'

"The morning passed pleasantly away. Evening came, with Bishop, true to his orders and firm at his post, holding his favorite charger with one hand, while the other was waiting to offer the ready stirrup. The sun sank in the horizon, and yet the Colonel appeared not. And then the old soldier marvelled at his chief's



delay. 'Twas strange, 'twas passing strange'—surely he was not wont to be a single moment behind his appointments, for he was the most punctual of all men. Meantime, the host enjoyed the scene of the veteran on duty at the gate, while the Colonel was so agreeably employed in the parlor; and proclaiming that no guest ever left his house after sunset, his military visitor was, without much difficulty, persuaded to order Bishop to put up the horses for the night. The sun rode high in the heavens the ensuing day, when the enamored soldier pressed with his spur his charger's side, and speeded on his way to the seat of government, where, having despatched his public business, he retraced his steps, and, at the White House, the engagement took place, with preparations for the marriage.

“And much hath the biographer heard of that marriage, from gray-haired domestics, who waited at the board where love made the feast and Washington was the guest. And rare and high was the revelry, at that palmy period of Virginia's festal age; for many were gathered to that marriage, of the good, the great, the gifted, and the gay, while Virginia, with joyous acclamation hailed in her youthful hero a prosperous and happy bridegroom.

“‘And so you remember when Colonel Washington came a-courting of your mistress?’ said the biographer to old Cully, in his hundreth year. ‘Ay, master, that *I* do,’ replied this ancient family servant, who had lived to see five generations; ‘great times, sir, great times! Shall never see the like again!’—‘And Washington looked something like a man, a proper man; hey, Cully?’—‘Never see'd the like, sir;

never the likes of him, tho' I have seen many in my day; so tall, so straight! and then he sat a horse and rode with such an air! Ah, sir; he was like no one else! Many of the grandest gentlemen, in their gold lace, were at the wedding, but none looked like the man himself!' Strong, indeed, must have been the impressions which the person and manner of Washington made upon the rude, 'untutored mind' of this poor negro, since the lapse of three quarters of a century had not sufficed to efface them."<sup>1</sup>

This poetic ceremony took place, in all probability, at old St. Peter's Church, near the "White House," residence of Mrs. Custis—possibly at the fine old colonial house itself (accounts vary).

A little more than a century later, another noble Federal soldier, commander of a mighty host then slowly enveloping Richmond, knelt at the altar of this venerable old forest church, and prayed most fervently that he, like Washington a hundred years before, might become the saviour of his distracted country!<sup>2</sup>

It was a curious coincidence that the surrender of Fort Duquesne and of the fair and charming widow took place almost simultaneously.

Of her personal characteristics her grandson writes:

"In person, Mrs. Washington was well-formed, and somewhat below the middle size. To judge from

<sup>1</sup> G. W. P. Custis, *Recollections and Private Memoirs of Washington*, p. 501.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. G. B. McClellan, *Diary*.

her portrait at Arlington House, painted by Woolaston, in 1757, when she was in the bloom of life, she must at that period have been eminently handsome. In her dress, though plain, she was so scrupulously neat, that ladies have often wondered how Mrs. Washington could wear a gown for a week, go through her kitchen and laundries, and all the varieties of places in the routine of domestic management, and yet the gown retained its snow-like whiteness, unsullied by even a single speck.”<sup>1</sup>

“Mrs. Washington was an uncommon early riser, leaving her pillow at day-dawn at all seasons of the year, and becoming at once actively engaged in her household duties. After breakfast she retired for an hour to her chamber, which hour was spent in prayer and reading the Holy Scriptures, a practice that she never omitted during half a century of her varied life.”<sup>2</sup>

“Mrs. Carrington, wife of Colonel Edward Carrington, who, with her husband, visited the family at Mount Vernon a little while before General Washington’s death, wrote to her sister as follows, concerning Mrs. Washington:

‘Let us repair to the old lady’s room, which is precisely in the style of our good old aunt’s—that is to say, nicely fixed for all sorts of work. On one side sits the chambermaid, with her knitting; on the other, a little colored pet, learning to sew. An old decent woman is there, with her table and shears, cutting out the negroes’ winter clothes, while the good old

<sup>1</sup> G. W. P. Custis, *Recollections and Private Memoirs of Washington*, p. 514.

lady directs them all, incessantly knitting herself. She points out to me several pair of nice colored stockings and gloves she had just finished, and presents me with a pair half done, which she begs I will finish and wear for her sake.'

"Such is the picture of the wealthy and honored wife of Washington, in the privacy of her home. What an example of industry and economy for the wives and daughters of America! Mrs. Washington always spoke of the days of her public life at New York and Philadelphia, as her 'lost days.'"<sup>1</sup>

We may well wind up this chapter with the views, in brief, of her two most recent biographers:

"Very little is really known of his wife, beyond the facts that she was *petite*, over-fond, hot-tempered, obstinate, and a poor speller. In 1778, she was described as 'a sociable, pretty kind of woman,' and she seems to have been but little more. One who knew her well described her as 'not possessing much sense, though a perfect lady and remarkably well calculated for her position,' and confirmatory of this is the opinion of an English traveller that 'there was nothing remarkable in the person of the lady of the President; she was matronly and kind, with perfect good breeding.' None the less she satisfied Washington; even after the proverbial six months were over he refused to wander from Mount Vernon, writing that 'I am now, I believe, fixed at this seat with an agreeable Consort for life,' and in 1783 he spoke of her as the 'partner of all my Domestic enjoyments.'

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Meade's *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, vol. i, p. 98.

“John Adams, in one of his recurrent moods of bitterness and jealousy towards Washington, demanded, ‘Would Washington have ever been commander of the revolutionary army or president of the United States if he had not married the rich widow of Mr. Custis?’ To ask such a question is to overlook the fact that Washington’s colonial military fame was entirely achieved before his marriage.”<sup>1</sup>

“To the charm of youth and beauty were added that touch of quiet sweetness and that winning grace of self-possession which come to a woman wived in her girlhood, and widowed before age or care has checked the first full tide of life. At seventeen she had married Daniel Parke Custis, a man more than twenty years her senior; but eight years of quiet love and duty as wife and mother had only made her youth the more gracious in that rural land of leisure and good neighbourhood; and a year’s widowhood had been but a suitable preparation for perceiving the charm of this stately young soldier who now came riding her way upon the public business. His age was her own; all the land knew him and loved him for gallantry and brave capacity; he carried himself like a prince—and he forgot his errand to linger in her company.”<sup>2</sup>

“But when at last he was free again, there was no reason why Washington should wait longer to be happy, and he was married to Martha Custis on the 6th of January, 1759. The sun shone very bright that day, and there was the fine glitter of gold, the

<sup>1</sup> Paul Leicester Ford, *The True George Washington*, p. 93.

<sup>2</sup> Woodrow Wilson, *George Washington*, p. 99.

brave show of resplendent uniforms, in the little church where the marriage was solemnized. Officers of His Majesty's service crowded there, in their gold lace and scarlet coats, to see their comrade wedded; the new Governor, Francis Fauquier, himself came, clad as befitted his rank; and the bridegroom took the sun not less gallantly than the rest, as he rode, in blue and silver and scarlet, beside the coach and six that bore his bride homeward amidst the thronging friends of the countryside. The young soldier's love of a gallant array and a becoming ceremony was satisfied to the full, and he must have rejoiced to be so brave a horseman on such a day. For three months of deep content he lived with his bride at her own residence, the White House, by York Riverside, where their troth had been plighted, forgetting the fatigues of the frontier, and learning gratefully the new life of quiet love and homely duty.

"These peaceful, healing months gone by, he turned once more to public business. Six months before his marriage he had been chosen a member of the House of Burgesses for Frederick County—the county which had been his scene of adventure in the old days of surveying in the wilderness, and in which ever since Braddock's fatal rout he had maintained his headquarters striving to keep the border against the savages."<sup>1</sup>

Of the passages here quoted, let the reader select for himself the one best suited to his conception of Lady Washington, as she comes down to us on the white wings of unsullied tradition.

<sup>1</sup> Woodrow Wilson, *George Washington*, p. 102.

## CHAPTER VIII

### ARCADY

**I**N 1756-60, an English archdeacon was travelling through Virginia on horseback, and in the course of his travels he comes to Mount Vernon, which he thus describes :

“From Colchester we went about twelve miles farther to Mount Vernon. This place is the property of Colonel Washington, and truly deserving of its owner. The house is most beautifully situated upon a high hill on the banks of the Potomac; and commands a noble prospect of water, of cliffs, of woods, and plantation. The river is nearly two miles broad, though two hundred from the mouth; and divides the dominions of Virginia from Maryland. We rested here one day, and proceeded up the river about twenty-six miles, to take a view of the Great Falls.”<sup>1</sup>

It was to this “beautifully situated” place that the young colonel took his bride, in the spring of 1759, after a happy honeymoon of three months spent at the “White House,” part of the ancestral acres of the Dandridges. Of these acres, 15,000 belonged to the Custis estate, and came, with the fair widow’s £45,000 in stocks, bonds, and money, under the care and charge of her energetic husband.

<sup>1</sup> A. Burnaby, *Travels Through North America*, p. 67.

How energetic this young man was, and how lynx-eyed in his circumstantial consideration of all "the ins and outs, ups and downs" of the connubial state, may be gathered from his first letter to his London agents, Robert Cary & Co., Merchants, London, and from the significant invoice that follows:

"TO ROBERT CARY AND COMPANY, MERCHANTS,  
LONDON

"Williamsburg, 1 May, 1759.

"GENTLN.,

"The inclosed is the minister's certificate of my marriage with Mrs. Martha Custis, properly, as I am told, authenticated. You will, therefore, for the future please to address all your letters, which relate to the affairs of the late Daniel Parke Custis, Esqr., to me, as by marriage I am entitled to a third part of that estate, and invested likewise with the care of the other two thirds by a decree of our General Court, which I obtained in order to strengthen the power I before had in consequence of my wife's administration.

"I have many letters of yours in my possession unanswered; but at present this serves only to advise you of the above change, and at the same time to acquaint you, that I shall continue to make you the same consignments of tobacco as usual, and will endeavor to increase it in proportion as I find myself and the estate benefited thereby.

"The scarcity of the last year's crop, and the high prices of tobacco, consequent thereupon, would, in any other case, have induced me to sell the estate's crop (which indeed is only 16 hhd.) in the country; but,



for a present, and I hope small advantage only, I did not care to break the chain of correspondence, that has so long subsisted, and therefore have, according to your desire, given Captn. Talman, an offer of the whole.

“On the other side is an invoice of some goods, which I beg of you to send me by the first ship, bound either to Potomack or Rappahannock, as I am in immediate want of them. Let them be insured, and, in case of accident re-shipped without delay. Direct for me at Mount Vernon, Potomack River, Virginia; the former is the name of my seat, the other of the river on which 'tis situated. I am, etc.

“May, 1759.

“Invoice of Sundry Goods to be Ship'd by Robt. Cary, Esq., and Company for the use of George Washington—viz:

“1 Tester Bedstead  $7\frac{1}{2}$  feet pitch with fashionable bleu or blue and white curtains to suit a Room laid wyl Ireld. paper.—

“Window curtains of the same for two windows; with either Papier Maché Cornish to them, or Cornish covered with the Cloth.

“1 fine Bed Coverlid to match the Curtains. 4 Chair bottoms of the same; that is, as much covering suited to the above furniture as will go over the seats of 4 Chairs (which I have by me) in order to make the whole furniture of this Room uniformly handsome and genteel.

“1. Fashionable Sett of Desert Glasses and Stands for Sweetmeats Jellys etc.—together with Wash Glasses and a proper Stand for these also.—

“2 Setts of Chamber, or Bed Carpets—Wilton.

"4. Fashionable China Branches & Stands for Candles.

"2 Neat fire Screens—

"50 lbs. Spirma Citi Candles—

"6 Carving Knives and Forks—handles of Stained Ivory and bound with Silver.

"A pretty large Assortment of Grass Seeds—among which let there be a good deal of Lucerne and St. Foi, especially the former, also a good deal of English bleu Grass Clover Seed I have—

"1 Large neat and Easy Couch for a Passage.

"50 yards of best Floor Matting.—

"2 pair of fashionable mixd. or Marble Cold. Silk Hose.

"6 pr. of finest cotton Ditto.

"6 pr. of finest thread Ditto.

"6 pr. of midling Do. to cost abt 5/

"6 pr worsted Do of yl best Sorted—2 pr of wch to be white.

"N. B. All the above Stockings to be long, and tolerably large.

"1 piece of finest and most fashionable Stock Tape.

"1 Suit of Cloaths of the finest Cloth & fashionable colour made by the Inclos'd measure.—

"The newest and most approv'd Treatise of Agriculture—besides this, send me a Small piece in Octavo—called a New System of Agriculture, or a Speedy Way to grow Rich.

"Longley's Book of Gardening.—

"Gibson, upon Horses, the lattest Edition in Quarto—

"Half a dozn pair of Men's neatest shoes, and Pumps, to be made by one Didsbury on Colo. Baylor's

Last—but a little larger than his—& to have high heels—

“6 pr Mens riding Gloves—rather large than the middle size.

“One neat Pocket Book, capable of receiving Memorandums & Small Cash accts. to be made of Ivory, or any thing else that will admit of cleaning.—

“Fine Soft Calf Skin for a pair of Boots—

“Ben leathr. for Soles.

“Six Bottles of Greenhows Tincture.

“Order from the best House in Madeira a Pipe of the best Old Wine, and let it be securd from Pilferers.”<sup>1</sup>

Having married a fashionable woman—a sensible “nut-brown maid,” so brunette of complexion and brilliant of eye that tradition called her “the dark ladye”—Washington felt it necessary to be fashionable too, in all his dress and appointments; shoes, saddles, gloves, glass, table-ware, beds, draperies, silken hose, and daily habiliments must all be of fashionable type, cut, or kind; the ancient hospitalities of the place must be kept up with a pipe of the best Madeira; ivory-handled knives, inlaid with silver, must grace the festal board, while *papier-maché* mouldings set off the windows whose flowing draperies must come from London.

The Arcadian life, which was to last nearly fifteen years, had begun. Agriculture, gardening, horses, tobacco: these are to fill the gallant Colonel’s life for the next half-generation, and to occupy

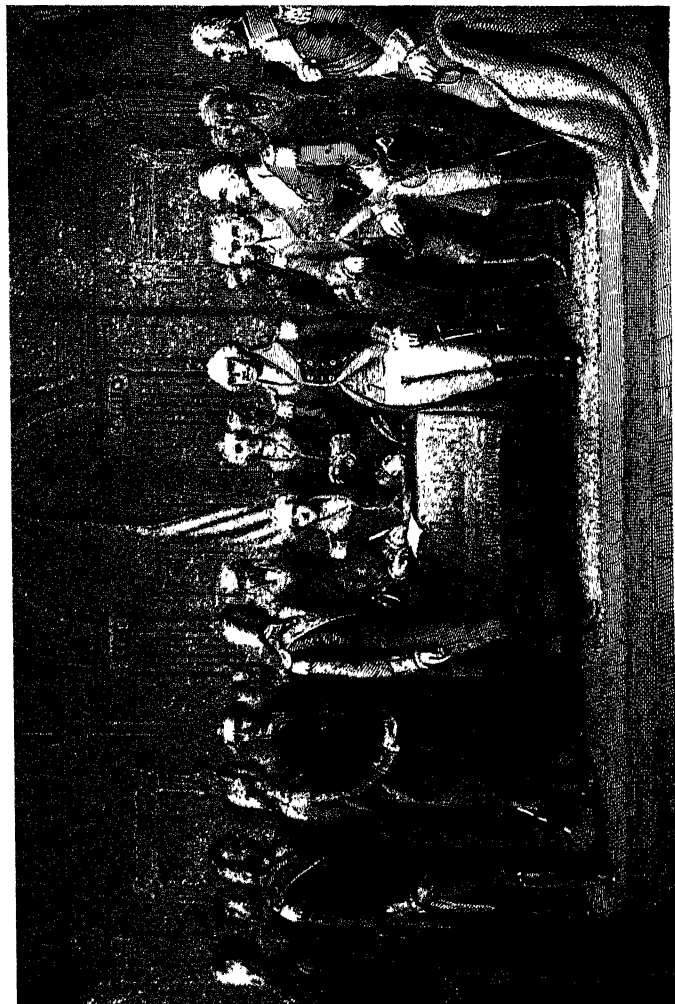
<sup>1</sup> Ford, *Writings of George Washington*, vol. ii, pp. 126-129.

time and attention once wholly given to Indian warfare, expeditions into the wilderness, the settlement of the Ohio Company's affairs in the region of "The Beautiful River," to active and earnest correspondence with Dinwiddie about frontier difficulties, building of forts, enrolment or desertion of troops, the thousand what-nots of responsible official life under Lord Albemarle, or the Earl of Loudon.

The ten years of intense activity, between 1749 and 1759, were to be succeeded by fifteen years of halcyon calm—halcyon as compared with the unhallowed activities of the frontier—during which he was to pass through another and most honourable phase of his education for greater things, his fifteen years' service in the Virginia House of Burgesses. A premonition of this service crops out in the following anecdote, preserved for us by William Wirt, to whom it was related by Edmund Randolph, an eye-witness of the scene:

"Colonel Washington resided with his wife at the White House, for three months after marriage, for his duties as a member of the house of burgesses required his presence at Williamsburg a considerable portion of that time. Soon after the meeting of that body, in January, it was resolved to return their thanks to Washington, in a public manner, for the distinguished services which he had rendered to his country. His tried friend, Mr. Robinson, was yet the speaker, and upon him devolved the duty."

The scene on the occasion, as related by Mr. Wirt,



INTERVIEW OF HOWE'S MESSENGER WITH WASHINGTON.  
After the painting by M. A. Wageman.



on the authority of an eye-witness, was a memorable one.

"As soon as Colonel Washington took his seat," says Wirt, "Mr. Robinson, in obedience to this order, and following the impulse of his own generous and grateful heart, discharged the duty with great dignity, but with such warmth of coloring, and strength of expression, as entirely to confound the young hero. He rose to express his acknowledgments for the honor; but such was his trepidation and confusion, that he could not give distinct utterance to a single syllable. He blushed, stammered, and trembled for a second; when the speaker relieved him, by a stroke of address that would have done honor to Louis the Fourteenth in his proudest and happiest moment. 'Sit down, Mr. Washington,' said he, with a conciliatory smile, 'your modesty is equal to your valor, and that surpasses the power of any language that I possess.'"<sup>1</sup>

We see the young officer poring over Longley's *Book of Gardening*, "the newest and most important Treatise of Agriculture," "a small piece in Octavo—called *A New System of Agriculture*," and *Gibson upon Horses*, "the latest Edition in Quarto," intent upon renewing his lands and gardens and grounds, delightful reminiscences of which still remain in the surroundings of Mount Vernon. His passion for fine breeds of horses is evidenced by his early order for Gibson's book on the subject, and many are the references, in the correspondence,

<sup>1</sup> Lossing, *Washington and the American Republic*, vol. i, p. 288.

to the noble succession of blooded steeds that followed each other in his stables—Ajax, and Blue-skin, and Silver Eye, and Shakspeare, Magnolia, and Prescott, and Jackson, and Nelson, the charger ridden at Cornwallis's surrender in 1781, but never again, thereafter, mounted.

The young master of Mount Vernon was one of those buoyant and irrepressible personalities, who by the mere force of their buoyancy and irrepressibility must always rise to the top whether in peace or war. For a hundred miles around he was the envy and admiration of the colonial gentry, a standing candidate when an election for burgesses was to be held, as constantly re-elected, a toast at plantation tables where he was Othello to many a Desdemona, a godfather in demand by the baby Virginians, who took the opportunity of the mid-century to appear upon the scene, a welcome friend and adviser to those who claimed his scientific or practical knowledge.

The Rev. Andrew Burnaby alludes, in an extended footnote, to the universal esteem in which Washington was ever thus held after his gallantry in the Braddock expedition, and, describing the political character of the Virginians of the time, remarks:

“The public or political character of the Virginians corresponds with their private one: they are haughty and jealous of their liberties, impatient of restraint, and can scarcely bear the thought of being controuled by any superior power. Many of them consider the



colonies as independent states, not connected with Great Britain, otherwise than by having the same common king, and being bound to her by natural affection. There are but few of them that have a turn for business, and even those are by no means expert at it. I have known them, upon a very urgent occasion, vote the relief of a garrison, without once considering whether the thing was practicable, when it was most evidently and demonstrably otherwise. In matters of commerce they are ignorant of the necessary principles that must prevail between a colony and the mother country; they think it a hardship not to have an unlimited trade to every part of the world. They consider the duties upon their staple as injurious only to themselves; and it is utterly impossible to persuade them that they affect the consumer also. However, to do them justice, the same spirit of generosity prevails here which does in their private character; they never refuse any necessary supplies for the support of government when called upon, and are a generous and loyal people.

“The women are, generally speaking, handsome, though not to be compared with our fair countrywomen in England. They have but few advantages, and consequently are seldom accomplished; this makes them reserved, and unequal to any interesting or refined conversation. They are immoderately fond of dancing, and indeed it is almost the only amusement they partake of: but even in this they discover want of taste and elegance, and seldom appear with that gracefulness and ease, which these movements are calculated to display.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A. Burnaby, *Travels Through North America*, pp. 55-56.

Virginia, indeed, was about to enter into that "imminent deadly breach," which even now was widening fearfully between mother and daughter, and could only be bridged over by thousands of slain and millions of money. The venerable arch-deacon, fresh from his Greenwich vicarage, and full of his old-world sensitiveness to impressions, felt this growing independence of Virginia, and breathed it vigorously into the ear of his countrymen as soon as he returned to England.

Washington's Journal of this period is filled with minute and interesting particulars of his life and occupations a year after his marriage. "Mrs. Washington is taken down with Meazles," and ladies and gentlemen come and go in their "chariots," which lumber from plantation to plantation in the slow manner of the time. Bishop Meade, in his *Old Churches*, gives a quaint account of the fates and fortunes of one of the Washington chariots which fell into his possession:

"There was, however, one object of interest belonging to General Washington, concerning which I have a special right to speak,—*viz.*: his old English coach, in which himself and Mrs. Washington not only rode in Fairfax county, but travelled through the length and breadth of our land. So faithfully was it executed that, at the conclusion of this long journey, its builder, who came over with it and settled in Alexandria, was proud to be told by the General that not a nail or screw had failed. It so happened, in a way I need not state, that this coach came into my hands about fifteen years

after the death of General Washington. In the course of time, from disuse, it being too heavy for these latter days, it began to decay and give way. Becoming an object of desire to those who delight in relics, I caused it to be taken to pieces and distributed among the admiring friends of Washington who visited my house, and also among a number of female associations for benevolent and religious objects, which associations, at their fairs and on other occasions, made a large profit by converting the fragments into walking-sticks, picture-frames, and snuff-boxes. About two-thirds of one of the wheels thus produced one hundred and forty dollars. There can be no doubt but that at its dissolution it yielded more to the cause of charity than it did to its builder at its first erection. Besides other mementos of it, I have in my study, in the form of a sofa, the hind-seat, on which the General and his lady were wont to sit.”<sup>1</sup>

“I have always considered marriage,” wrote Washington, “as the most interesting event of one’s life”; “you too,” he wrote to Chastellux, “have caught that terrible contagion domestic felicity—which same, like the smallpox or the plague, a man can have only once in his life; because it commonly lasts him (at least with us in America,—I don’t know how you manage these matters in France) for his whole lifetime.”

Washington had indeed “caught the contagion” of which he writes, once for all. Always a favourite with women, who wrote to him off and on during

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Meade, *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, vol. ii, p. 237.

his entire life, and eagerly courted his notice both during the dark and the bright days of the Revolution, he has left many charming references to them in his letters to Nellie Custis, Mrs. Fairfax, "Jackie" Custis's widow, and others, and he excelled in all the polite accomplishments which the women of the eighteenth century were supposed most to desire. He rode well, was an accomplished dancer (keeping up the Terpsichorean grace till he was sixty-six), played loo, whist, and other games, though never with the feverish passion of Charles James Fox, and his other great contemporaries across the water; was a tried pedestrian, thinking nothing (as Burnaby says) of walking four hundred miles to the Ohio and back, on his mission to St. Pierre; and was an adept in swordmanship, learned from his old teacher, Van Braam.

No apothecary's or mercer's clerk could be more minute than he, when he was ordering medicines for Mount Vernon or dress-goods for Mrs. Washington; and Master John and Miss Patsy came in for their London orders on Cary & Co., for all sorts of haberdashery, trinkets, toys, dolls ("fashionable" at 10 shillings), children's books, pastes, powders, perfumes, "trifles light as air," yet heavy enough to load a good ship, travelling Virginia-ward in the changeable frost-laden weather of 1760. Even a pair of stays is ordered for the tiny miss of four, and pumps and breast-knots, ribbons for the hair, and buckles for the shoes, ivory combs and "minikin" and corking pins, packs of playing cards,

bell-glasses, scarlet broadcloth, "Easter Hats at about 5 Shillings," and *et ceteras* innumerable, picturesquely interspersed with orders for green tea, cheese, plantation utensils, jalap, and hogsheds of porter.

Tobacco was at that time (Burnaby) selling at fifty shillings a hundredweight; and Washington is very solicitous about the great staple, 16,000 pounds of which was lawful salary for a "parson," of whom there were then between sixty and seventy, mostly praiseworthy persons, says the archdeacon, in the province.

The broad Potomac stretched in shining silver at the door, and there on many a summer's day, or springtime morning, when the marvellous shoals of shad and herring began their run up the river, might be witnessed the tragedy chronicled in the archdeacon's pages:

"A very curious sight is frequently exhibited upon this and the other great rivers in Virginia, which for its novelty is exceedingly diverting to strangers. During the spring and summer months the fishing-hawk is often seen hovering over the rivers, or resting on the wing without the least visible change of place for some minutes, then suddenly darting down and plunging into the water, from whence it seldom rises again without a rock fish, or some other considerable fish, in its talons. It immediately shakes off the water like a mist, and makes the best of its way towards the woods. The bald eagle, which is generally upon the watch, instantly pursues, and if it can overtake, en-

deavours to soar above it. The hawk growing solicitous for its own safety drops the fish, and the bald eagle immediately stoops, and seldom fails to catch it in its pounces before it reaches the water.”<sup>1</sup>

Many a time did Washington, doubtless, become a spectator of the airy battle, as he strode up and down the pillared portico of his residence, and looked out over the river to the soft, blue hills of the Dominion of Maryland, where ninety thousand loyal subjects of King George III. (but just proclaimed King) then dwelt in peace and plenty; times so peaceful and plenteous that diamond-back terrapin were fed to negroes, and wild-duck—teal, mallard, red-head, or what not—to him that fancied it.

Visits to this delectable land varied with trips to Williamsburg, and trots to Alexandria, in chaise, chariot, or aback of one of the fine saddle-horses. Hardly a day passed without the round of the plantations being traversed over ten or fifteen miles of delightful woodland, or through fields where the bannered tobacco lifted its pale-green, mullein-like stalks, and flung to the breeze those wonderfully delicate leaves which, from the cradle to the grave, from burgeon to blossom and ripening sweetness, needed tireless vigilance against worm and blight and pest of every description, until they turned into the golden leaves that, literally, became leaves of gold in the warehouses of Robert Cary & Co., of the London market.

<sup>1</sup> A. Burnaby, *Travels Through North America*, p. 68.

The vast leisure of Arcadian life lent Washington time for those huge invoices—all in his own autograph—which he from time to time despatched to London, invoices which give faithful glimpses of the luxury of the years antedating '76, as well as of the details of a well-ordered gentleman's household.

As Washington re-wrote his "dear Patsy's" letters for her when occasion required, so, doubtless, the pair consulted together over these marvellous lists to be forwarded to London, including everything from "white and brown sugar Candy" to "tester Bedsteads," emetics, purges, brimstone, "spermi Ceti" candles, and exact measurements for "shoes like Colonel Baylor's."

Intense must have been the excitement and amusement in the Mount Vernon household, when some agile little "picaninny" came flying up to the "Great House," and announced that a white-sailed brig or bark had dropped anchor at the wharf below, while the browned and whiskered master, tawny with sea-salt and sunburn, asked for Colonel Washington.

And the unpacking of such an invoice as the four or five double-columned one, on page 134 of Ford's *Writings of George Washington*, must have been the opening of the realm of King Santa Claus himself, when it reached Mount Vernon.

Interesting accounts exist of the celebration of Christmas at this very time, in the Old Dominion, in the Journal kept by a Princeton divinity student, then tutor at Nomini Hall, seat of the Carters, not

far from Mount Vernon, and within convenient riding distance of Bushfield, where John Augustine Washington lived, and of Mount Airy, the lovely and lordly seat of the Tayloes (still in existence).

This worthy gentleman went down to Virginia, what the slang of the day called a "blue" Presbyterian; but after a year's residence at "Nomini Hall" became almost a "perverted" Episcopalian in point of reverence for dancing, horse-racing, cock-fighting, "stepping the minuet," toasting the ladies, and other genial amusements then prevalent in the "Northern Neck." The negroes (of whom there were six hundred on the sixty thousand Carter acres) expected liberal remembrances in the way of "bits" and half-bits (parts of a divided pisterine, used as currency, and equivalent to a few pence, English), rum-and-water, "pisimmon" extract (as Master Fithian writes it), and other potential spirituous agencies; the gentry rode from plantation to plantation forming house-parties or giving balls, ladies in the gorgeous quilted skirts, bodices, and brocades of the period, with *crêped* hair, fantastically wreathed with artificial flowers and strings of pearls, "tripped the light fantastic toe" through the mazes of the dance until dawn glistened over the rosy Potomac, and marches, jigs, reels, and "country dances" (cotillions) succeeded each other in swift profusion. Councillor Carter was a born musician, and his house resounded with the tinkling guitar, the silvery harmonicum (just invented by the all-accomplished Benjamin Franklin), the violin,





WASHINGTON MEDAL (1776).



flute, harpsichord, and organ; each of the seven children played on something or other, and even the Presbyterian tutor beguiles one of the Carter boys to play the flute for him twenty minutes every night after he had retired to bed. Nellie Custis's harpsichord—on which “she played and cried and cried and played” when her inexorable grandmamma, Mrs. Washington, made her practice six hours a day—and Washington's flute were not yet part of the paraphernalia of Mount Vernon; but there can be no doubt of the Colonel's fondness for music, dancing, the whist-table (note the two dozen packs of playing cards ordered in one of his invoices), the back of a fine horse, and the soft swing and swoop of a luxurious chariot. It is on record that he danced three hours hand-running, without once sitting down, when Mrs. Nathaniel Greene, wife of the General, was his partner at a historic ball; while his ever-conscientious expense-book records, in 1756 or '57, “8 Shillings at Cards” and sundry sums for “treats” to the Philadelphia ladies, at the time when the fair eyes of Mary Philipse rested benevolently for a moment on him. His fondness for theatres and theatricals was always a marked characteristic, and numerous are the allusions to them in his social correspondence and the gazettes of the time.

Even Arcady, however, had to surrender to punctilio and punctuality: the timepieces of Mount Vernon—gilt French, or “grandfather” chronometers as they might be—marked off the hours with

a systematic regularity and even rigour, which startled more than one easy-going guest. The Arcadian couple rose at dawn, when the lady betook herself to her Bible and her housekeeping, and the lord (after building his own fire, shaving himself neatly, and tying his own cue) went forth to inspect stables and kennels, then back to his favourite breakfast of tea and corn-cakes.

After breakfast, donning his drab riding-suit, high boots, and gauntlets, he rode one of his excellent horses over the plantation, visited the wheat and tobacco-fields, interviewed the overseer, inspected the mills, fisheries, negro quarters, listened sympathetically to the complaints of the sick and aged, had them humanely attended to, and returned to the mansion to "post his accounts" (a favourite occupation), study his gardening or horse-breeding manuals, look over the *Williamsburg Gazette*, with its already perceptible mutterings of discontent and revolution, or converse with the guests, who were already beginning to make of Mount Vernon what he, later, described it to his mother as, "a tavern." Dr. Burnaby was one of the countless host who enjoyed this unbroken hospitality, a hospitality duplicated in a slight degree, a hundred years later, at Craigie House, when every distinguished foreigner that visited America bore a letter to Longfellow.

At three o'clock, dinner was served, Washington never allowing more than five minutes' difference in watches to delay the meal, and humorously throwing the blame for the inopportune punctuality on the

cook, "who could not wait." In about an hour the meal was over, and then, towards five or six, after the habitual nuts, raisins, and toasts—"to the fair," to the "Sons of Liberty," to "American trade and commerce" (as time wagged on towards 1776), came the ever-delightful tea and its *déshabillé* talk.

Washington took no supper.

At nine o'clock, taking up a candle in its bright brass candlestick, the host mounted the staircase and lighted his more distinguished guests, personally, to bed.

Of course, the routine varied when balls or entertainments or evening parties were formally given, and the neighbours at Gunston Hall, Belvoir, Nomini Hall, or Mount Airy assembled to do honour to the mistress of Mount Vernon in a set entertainment. Then, indeed, the musical chimes in the old clocks jingled out the midnight hour many a time and oft, and the flying hours (as in the exquisite fresco of Guido) saw the high-heeled dames, and powdered and ruffled cavaliers still entangled in the meshes of the latest dance from Versailles or St. James's.

The worthy Fithian was rudely tempted by these gracious pleasantries, and often expressed his bitter regrets that he could not conscientiously enter into the innocent and harmless gaieties of the Virginians. One thing, however, he could not help doing: he would toast the absent "Laura," when it fell his turn—as it did to old Cædmon a thousand years before—"to play at the harp and sing a song," i.e.,

to drink a toast; and Fithian gladly did so with the gallants of Nomini Hall. Indeed, his Diary (dated 1773-74) contains various and sundry entries of strong drinks and potations for a sick body, somewhat inconsistent with the contempt showered, occasionally, on the junketting Virginians, whose "rings of beaux" stand outside the churches on Sundays, until the parson sends the clerk to hale them in to proper service, and dame and cavalier go around giving invitations to dinner after a fifteen minutes' sermon. Seeing that Councillor Carter successively went through the phases of the Established, the Baptist, and the Swedenborgian churches, and wound up by becoming a Papist, the young Presbyterian divine had ample opportunity at least to exercise his theological acumen. But he never swerved from the Westminster Catechism, and died a gallant soldier, sick of camp fever, at Fort Washington in 1776, Virginia, to the last, abiding a pleasant memory in his soul.

The old baronial style of living, between the parallels of the original grant, was in this decade in its full glory: the Byrds of Westover, the Harrisons and Carters of Brandon and Shirley, the Lewises of Kenmore, the Fairfaxes of Greenway Court and Belvoir, the Masons of Gunston Hall, the Calverts over the Potomac, as it swept grandly from its cataract to the Chesapeake, the Pages and Nelsons of Rosewell, the Lees of Stratford and Chantilly—all kept up an easy-going, semi-feudal state, into which the Washingtons as easily fell by right of lineage,

as well as of wealth and influential position in colonial circles. The Parkes had distinguished themselves in many a hard-fought campaign under Marlborough, and Queen Anne, herself, had bestowed her jewelled likeness and a brace of silver candlesticks (still owned by the Lee family) on the ancestor of the line, who first brought to her tidings of the great victory of Blenheim; and kindred oversea were speedily to contend for the honour of even a remote connection with the stars, mullets, bars, and heraldic raven of the Washingtons.

And thus the golden days—the *Saturnia regna* sung in enchanting measures by the Mantuan poet—went by, and Washington might well repeat to the Marquis de Chastellux that “the married state was the most interesting in the world.”

He had reached the Golden Milestone.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE GOLDEN MILESTONE

WASHINGTON was now eight-and-twenty, an age at which the younger Pitt was already prime minister of Great Britain, Burke had already written "On the Sublime and Beautiful," the oratory of Charles James Fox had begun to assume a ripened effulgence, and a whole band of young immortals—Goethe, Burns, Lucan, Hugo, Byron—were already basking in the golden light which legend wreathed poetically about the summit of "twin-peaked Parnassus"; yet nothing fantastically precocious as yet appeared in the steadfast young American, settled at Mount Vernon as a model farmer, and pursuing the bucolic pleasures of agriculture as tranquilly as if he had just stepped out of the *Georgics* of Virgil. The restful years that followed the volcanic decade of 1750-1760 were years of quiet preparation, unconscious maturing of the intellectual powers, unnoticed growth in political sagacity, and gathering of virile strength for use in the approaching struggle with the mother-country.

The Rev. Samuel Davies, in a sermon preached in Pennsylvania, shortly after Braddock's defeat, had prophetically foreshadowed Washington's life when he said :



“As a remarkable instance of this, I may point out to the public that heroic youth, Colonel Washington, whom I cannot but hope Providence has hitherto preserved in so signal a manner for some important service to his country.”<sup>1</sup>

This “heroic lad” had steadily grown into the formidable and accomplished leader who, on resigning his colonelcy in 1759, after his arduous duties were consummated, was affectionately addressed by his associate officers in the following terms:

“‘Judge, then, how sensibly we must be affected with the loss of such an excellent commander, such a sincere friend, and so affable a companion. How rare is it to find these amiable qualities blended in one man! How great the loss of such a man! . . . It gives us additional sorrow,’ they continued, ‘when we reflect, to find our unhappy country will receive a loss no less irreparable than our own. Where will it meet a man, so experienced in military affairs—one so renowned for patriotism, conduct, and courage? Who has so great a knowledge of the enemy we have to deal with? who so well acquainted with their situation and strength? who so much respected by the soldiery? who, in short, so able to support the military character of Virginia?’”<sup>2</sup>

Then requesting him to name a fit successor, they added in conclusion:

<sup>1</sup> Ford, *Writings of George Washington*, vol. i, p. 176, note.

<sup>2</sup> Lossing, *Washington and the American Republic*, vol. i, p. 286.

“ ‘ Frankness, sincerity, and certain openness of soul, are the true characteristics of an officer, and we flatter ourselves that you do not think us capable of saying anything contrary to the purest dictates of our minds. Fully persuaded of this, we beg leave to assure you that, as you have hitherto been the actuating soul of our whole corps, we shall at all times pay the most invariable regard to your will and pleasure, and will always be happy to demonstrate by our actions how much we respect and esteem you.’ ”

“ ‘ This opinion,’ says Marshall, ‘ was not confined to the officers of his regiment. It was common to Virginia, and had been adopted by the British officers with whom he served. The duties he performed, though not splendid, were arduous; and were executed with zeal and with judgment. The exact discipline he established in his regiment, when the temper of Virginia was extremely hostile to discipline, does credit to his military character; and the gallantry his troops displayed, whenever called into action, manifests the spirit infused into them by their commander.’ ”<sup>1</sup>

After the strenuous military experience of 1753-1758, it was most fitting that the next stage in this remarkable career should be pastoral, almost bucolic, the life of a quiet country gentleman who, having married a woman of wealth and refinement, settles down to a domestic felicity, which he playfully describes to the Marquis de Chastellux as “ a contagion ” that has at length caught the misanthrope

<sup>1</sup> Lossing, *Washington and the American Republic*, vol. i, p. 286.

himself. Washington could not read French, and perhaps had never even heard of Molière, and yet, in his humorous raillery of the marquis, he unconsciously reproduces the *dénoûment* of *Le Misanthrope*.

A little over a hundred miles from Mount Vernon lay Williamsburg, the old colonial capital where a hundred and odd gentlemen, calling themselves burghesses, met as the people's representatives, discussed public questions affecting the commonwealth, voted supplies for the maintenance of the colonial government, and constituted one of those marvellous playgrounds of politics and statesmanship, thirteen of which were soon to write in federal union, and produce the document which Gladstone called the most wonderful that ever emanated from the brain of man—the American Constitution.

Some of these plain country gentlemen had been educated in England, at Oxford, or Lincoln's Inn, or had been classically trained in philosophy and the humanities under the six professors of William and Mary College, the Alma Mater of Jefferson, Monroe, Tyler, and Chief Justice Marshall, the college of which Washington became chancellor in 1777.

This quaint old sprawling village—truly a "city of magnificent distances" as it stretched east and west into the primeval forest, and gathered into its skirts ample spaces of the Middle Plantation—was part of this time under the social sovereignty of Lord Botetourt, a man whose grace of manner and firmness of touch led Horace Walpole to charac-

terise him as "a bit of enamelled iron." The charm of his ostentatious courtesy and high spirits led Virginia to remember him with pleasure, and name one of her most beautiful counties after him, as she cherished the name and fame of Berkeley, Spotswood, Fairfax, Loudon, Fauquier, and Dinwiddie.

Many of the wealthier planter burgesses had homes at Williamsburg, where they kept open house in the fashion of Chaucer's Canterbury Pilgrimage, and where, at the ever-spread table, it fairly "snew" with abundance of good things for the delectation of the nomad legislator.

Hither the Washingtons came during the fifteen years the Colonel was a member of the House; and it may readily be inferred, that the representative of Fairfax County stood easily among the first, in that company of a hundred gentlemen and scholars whom Virginia had assembled, at the Raleigh Tavern or in the palace of Lord Botetourt, to discuss and decide subjects vital to her interests.

It is a strange fact, that Washington's correspondence is almost bare of references to his legislative life at Williamsburg, the numerous letters and diaries that remain being absorbed almost wholly with domestic matters, the management of his estates, orders on London for household use, occasional sharp reproofs to his London agents for extortionate charges and mean quality of goods, and detailed communications to the Governor, Council, and others, relative to land surveys and the taking up of reservations on the Ohio and Great

Kanawha. Washington was what would now be called "land-hungry," and possessed a keen eye for the choice and appropriation of the rich black bottom lands along the rivers of the western country. His experience as a land-surveyor—a position to which he had in his youth been licensed by William and Mary College—had educated both eye and judgment in the discovery of soils and locations adapted to agriculture, while the generous scale on which the life at Mount Vernon was laid out compelled him to husband and enlarge his resources in every legitimate way possible. It is curious to read his responses to would-be borrowers who, presuming on the lavish hospitality that prevailed at Mount Vernon, wrote to ask sums ranging from twenty to five hundred pounds. Mrs. Washington's two hundred or three hundred negroes were hardly sufficient to run the various plantations, and there are occasional references to the purchase of skilled labourers, masons, blacksmiths, carpenters, and the like—whose "likeliness" can be turned to the profit of the estate.

Washington did not touch tobacco in any shape or form, but his farmer's instinct was much concentrated on the cultivation of the weed, which, besides the fragrant leaf, turned out the crop of "barons of the Potomac" who made this lordly river celebrated.

As there were few towns in Virginia then worth speaking of, Washington's letters to his agents abound in directions to sail for the Potomac River,

“ which flows past my seat,” and not to the York or Rappahannock, where Mrs. Washington’s relatives reside; the anchorage at Mount Vernon being particularly good, free from wind, and sheltered from weather vicissitudes.

The goods that came from London frequently arrived at the wrong landing, variously damaged or mutilated, in bad condition owing to hurried disembarkation or careless packing. During this contemplative stage of his existence, the Colonel found time to order, from a London art dealer, plaster busts of Alexander, Julius Cæsar, Prince Eugène, the Duke of Marlborough, and the King of Prussia; adding to this formidable list of military heroes, gentler concessions to the fair sex in the shape of groups of Bacchus and Flora, “ Lyons ” rampant or otherwise for the chimneypiece, and a long list of literary celebrities, such as Chaucer, Spenser, Shakspeare, and certain Greek and Roman poets. Among these details a green silk “ Saque ” of Mrs. Washington’s finds lodgment, which is to be re-dyed and made over or “ turned into a genteel night-gown.”

The sylvan chronicle moves quaintly on, and embraces among much else the following:

“ Went a fox huntg. with Lord Fairfax and Colo. Fairfax, and my Br. Catchd. 2 Foxes. Began to gather corn at the Mill.

“ 23. Went a huntg. again with Lord Fairfax and his Brother, and Col. Fairfax. Catchd. nothing that we knew of. A fox was started.

"24. Mr. Robt. Alexander here; Went into the Neck.

"25. Mr. Bryan Fairfax, as also Messrs. Grayson and Phil. Alexander, came here by sunrise. Hunted and catchd. a fox with these and my Lord his Bro. and Colo. Fairfax, all of whom with Mrs. Fx. and Mr. Wetson (?) of Engd dined here.

"26. Hunted again in the above Compa. but catchd nothing.

"27. Went to Church.

"28. Went to the Vestry at Pohick Church.

"29. Went a Huntg. with Lord Fairfax etc. Catchd a Fox.

"30. At home all day. Colo. Mason and Mr. Cockburne came in the evening.

#### " DECEMBER

"1. Went to the Election of Burgesses for this County and was there, with Colo. West chosen. Stayd all Night to a Ball wch. I had given.

"2. Returnd home after dinner, accompanied by Colo. Mason, Mr. Cockburn and Messrs. Henderson Ross and Lawson.

"3. Went a fox huntg. in Company with Lord and Colo. Fairfax, Captn. McCarty and Messrs. Henderson and Ross. Started nothing. My Br. came in ye afternoon."<sup>1</sup>

In 1772, a famous portrait-painter comes along, and Charles Wilson Peale paints for us the well-known portrait of Washington as Colonel of the 22nd Virginia regiment, in blue coat faced with

<sup>1</sup> Ford, *Writings of George Washington*, vol. ii, p. 255.

scarlet, "Wolfe" hat, sash, and gorget—a picture now hanging in the chapel of Washington and Lee University at Lexington, Virginia. Peale also painted charming portraits of Mrs. Washington and her daughter and son, still owned by descendants of the family. Washington writes humorously of the sittings:

"TO DR. BOUCHER

"Mount Vernon, 21st May, 1772.

"Inclination having yielded to Importunity, I am now contrary to all expectation under the hands of Mr. Peale; but in so grave—so sullen a mood—and now and then under the influence of Morpheus, when some critical strokes are making, that I fancy the skill of this Gentleman's Pencil, will be put to it, in describing to the World what manner of man I am."<sup>1</sup>

Thus in easy round of work, exercise, and entertainment, life on the Potomac in the sixties wagged along, filled with the busy nothings of rural existence on a great plantation; the clatter of horse and hounds rang over the clear frosty hills, as the fox-hunting cavalcade, headed by Washington on "Blueskin," and Billy Lee on "Chickling," thundered over hill and dale after the grey foxes that "Vulcan," "Music," or "Sweet Lips" had started from their woodland lairs. Frosty Januarys faded into flowering Mays, and the bright Virginian summers ripened into those exquisite Octobers that sage meteorologists, like Burnaby, Fithian, Robert Bever-

<sup>1</sup> Ford, *Writings of George Washington*, vol. ii, p. 349.



ley, and Thomas Jefferson, set down in the weather tables or their diaries as the fairest in the world—"the season of sweet savours." Twice a year, the great ships from London dropped anchor in the river opposite the mansion, and unloaded the bales and boxes consigned to its owner.

The rippling smoothness of the chronicle is occasionally interrupted by an entry of illness, a record of a fortnight's absence at the Warm Springs in Berkeley County, in search of health, an exchange of courtesies with Governor Eden, Lord Dunmore (who arrived from New York in 1772, an ominous forerunner of Revolution), or the Calverts, or deep solicitude about "Jackie" Custis, the "son-in-law" as Washington quaintly calls him, who is wholly given to "horses, dogs, and guns," and has prematurely taken it into his head to fall in love with pretty Miss Calvert, lineal descendant of the Lords Baltimore. Washington hastily rides to New York and enters the young scapegrace at King's College, in the hope of counteracting the fair Marylander's charms; but all to no avail. He explains to the young lady's father that Custis has an ample fortune of £8,000 "upon bond," fifteen thousand acres at or near Williamsburg, and two or three hundred negroes, besides his ultimate interest in his mother's dower; but to Dr. Boucher, that the boy at seventeen is almost totally ignorant of arithmetic, knows no Latin or Greek, and should know French "which is now deemed one of the indispensable polite accomplishments of the day."

It was during this period that he became deeply interested in a project to drain the Dismal Swamp, rode down thither on an exploring expedition, and examined the great morass almost as fully as Colonel Byrd of Westover had done in 1728, when establishing the dividing line between Virginia and North Carolina. Later on in his life, he became profoundly interested in improving the navigation of the Potomac, and in the James River and Kanawha Canal project, designed to connect the interior water-system of the continent with the ocean.

Lord Dunmore sought his advice and companionship, in a proposed journey of inspection and exploitation to the Ohio Valley where, in the vicinity of Louisville and Cincinnati, titles from his land-patents still exist.

There is no evidence in Washington's letters, how he viewed the Mephistophelean character of this last royal Governor of Virginia; nor whether he credited the accounts of his arrogance and avarice. The letters from the Colonel to the Earl are couched in punctilious forms that seem to have been learned from some old-world manual, almost obsequious in their long-drawn-out circumlocutions of respect.

When Sunday came, a great stillness and reverence fell over Mount Vernon. Washington never received visitors on Sunday at this time. Over in the noble old woods skirting his estates, six or seven miles distant, lay Pohick Church, where the Rev. Charles Green had officiated, as Rector of Truro

Parish, from 1738 to 1765. Of this fine old colonial church, Bishop Meade gives an interesting account:

“The Old Pohick Church was a frame building, and occupied a site on the south side of Pohick Run, and about two miles from the present, which is on the north side of the run. When it was no longer fit for use, it is said the parishioners were called together to determine on the locality of the new church, when George Mason, the compatriot of Washington, and senior vestryman, advocated the old site, pleading that it was the house in which their fathers worshipped, and that the graves of many were around it, while Washington and others advocated a more central and convenient one. The question was left unsettled and another meeting for its decision appointed. Meanwhile Washington surveyed the neighbourhood, and marked the houses and distances on a well drawn map, and, when the day of decision arrived, met all the arguments of his opponent by presenting this paper, and thus carried his point. In place of any description of this house in its past or present condition, I offer the following report of a visit made to it in 1837:

“My next visit was to Pohick Church, in the vicinity of Mount Vernon, the seat of General Washington. I designed to perform service there on Saturday as well as Sunday, but through some mistake no notice was given for the former day. The weather indeed was such as to prevent the assembling of any but those who prize such occasions so much as to be deterred only by very strong considerations. It was still raining when I approached the house, and found no one there. The wide-open doors invited me to enter,—

as they do invite, day and night, through the year, not only the passing traveller, but every beast of the field and fowl of the air. These latter, however, seem to have revered the house of God, since few marks of their pollution are to be seen throughout it. The interior of the house, having been well built, is still good. The chancel, Communion-table, and tables of the law, etc., are still there and in good order. The roof only is decaying; and at the time I was there the rain was dropping on these sacred places and on other parts of the house. On the doors of the pews, in gilt letters, are still to be seen the names of the principal families which once occupied them. How could I, while for at least an hour traversing those long aisles, entering the sacred chancel, ascending the lofty pulpit, forbear to ask, And is this the house of God which was built by the Washingtons, the Masons, the McCartys, the Grahams, the Lewises, the Fairfaxes?—the house in which they used to worship the God of our fathers according to the venerable forms of the Episcopal Church,—and some of whose names are yet to be seen on the doors of those now deserted pews? Is this also destined to moulder piecemeal away, or, when some signal is given, to become the prey of spoilers, and to be carried hither and thither and applied to every purpose under heaven?

“Surely patriotism, or reverence for the greatest of patriots, if not religion, might be effectually appealed to in behalf of this one temple of God. The particular location of it is to be ascribed to Washington, who, being an active member of the vestry when it was under consideration and in dispute where it should be placed, carefully surveyed the whole parish,

and, drawing an accurate and handsome map of it with his own hand, showed clearly where the claims of justice and the interests of religion required its erection.

“It was to this church that Washington for some years regularly repaired, at a distance of six or seven miles, never permitting any company to prevent the regular observance of the Lord’s day.”<sup>1</sup>

After the Revolution, from 1785, the family became regular attendants of Christ’s Church, Alexandria, where their pew is still shown.

There can be no reasonable doubt that Washington was, from the beginning, a devout believer in Christianity; his letters abound in evidences of this belief and are full of invocations to Divine Providence. His public orders and commands to his soldiers, during the war, constantly reminded them of their dependence on God, the necessity of supplicating His mercy and help in the great struggle, and the duty of observing Sunday. For a long time he was a communicant of the Episcopal Church, a vestryman of Truro Parish, and diligent in the reading of sermons and good books at home when the weather was too inclement for church. He was, indeed, markedly punctilious in the observance of all his religious duties. He fasted when a day of public humiliation, prayer, and fasting was ordered by the burgesses on the eve of the Revolution: his entry in his diary is: “Fasted all day.”

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Meade, *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, vol. ii, p. 227.

Mrs. Washington lived and died a devout communicant of the Church; and, while her husband did not take the learned interest in its theology and dogma that Jefferson took, there is every reason to believe that his life was continually ordered by its precepts, from the time he imbibed them from the teachings of his excellent mother.

“The fierce light that beats against a throne” has shone with implacable inquisitiveness into every nook and cranny of Washington’s soul, but has searched in vain to find him anything but a plain, high-minded, reverential Christian gentleman. Jefferson may veil himself in verbal evasions, ingenuities, and ambiguities, due to over-much erudition and a morbid aversion to the methods of the Inquisition; but the first President of the United States never juggled with words, never quibbled with his conscience, and everywhere and on all occasions showed himself a simple, plain-spoken, unostentatious believer in the Christian religion.

During these idyllic days of plantation life, however, chequered with their manifold vicissitudes of light and shade, fell one great shadow across the threshold of Mount Vernon: Patsy Custis, beloved namesake and daughter of Martha Washington, was seized with an attack of constitutional malady of the heart, and suddenly expired in the bloom of her fair young life. The grief caused by this bereavement shows pathetically in a letter of Washington, addressed to a friend:



MARTHA WASHINGTON.

From the portrait by Gilbert Stuart.





“To COLONEL BASSETT

“Mount Vernon, 20th June, 1773.

“DEAR SIR,

“It is an easier matter to conceive, than to describe the distress of this Family; especially that of the unhappy Parent of our Dear Patsy Custis, when I inform you that yesterday removed the Sweet Innocent Girl Entered [sic] into a more happy and peaceful abode than any she has met with in the afflicted Path she hitherto has trod.<sup>1</sup>

“She arose from Dinner about four o'clock in better health and spirits than she appeared to have been in for some time; soon after which she was seized with one of her usual Fits, and expired in it, in less than two minutes without uttering a word, a groan, or scarce a sigh.—This sudden, and unexpected blow, I scarce need add has almost reduced my poor Wife to the lowest ebb of Misery; which is encreas'd by the absence of her son, (whom I have just fixed at the College in New York from whence I returned the 8th Inst) and want of the balmy consolation of her Relations; which leads me more than ever to wish she could see them, and that I was Master of Arguments powerful enough to prevail upon Mrs. Dandridge [her mother] to make this place her entire and absolute home. I should think as she lives a lonesome life (Betsey being married) it might suit her well, and be agreeable, both to herself and my Wife, to me most assuredly it would.

“I do not purpose to add more at present, the end

<sup>1</sup>“19. About five o'clock poor Patsy Custis died suddenly.”  
—*From an interleaved Almanac.*

of my writing being only to inform you of this unhappy change.”<sup>1</sup>

In the course of these halcyon years, Washington had several times written that “the grim King of Terrors” had come very near to him, but never before had he actually entered the Mount Vernon household, much less snatched away its fairest blossom.

Mrs. Washington was to survive both her husband and all her children.

<sup>1</sup> Ford, *Writings of George Washington*, vol. ii, pp. 384-385.

## CHAPTER X

### OLD WILLIAMSBURG

“THE most ancient and loyal colony of Virginia ” has had, in its day (of three hundred years), three different capitals, corresponding to its three periods of infancy, youth, and maturity.

Of the first—historic Jamestown—only an ivied church tower and a garland of immortal memories remain to tell the noble tale of Virginia colonisation, historic tatters, tasselled with innumerable threads of incident that cling to Virginia’s earliest history. The eager seas, that brought the merchant adventurers to the New World, ate perpetually at the shores of the island city, and threatened to engulf it in absolute obliteration, when pious hands, in our day, rescued it from this ignoble end. For more than ninety years it was the heart and soul of Virginia affairs, ravaged by fire and flood, encompassed with bloody hostilities on all sides, from the beginning, the centre of a long and tangled history, the apparently indestructible old town crumbled and rose again, rose and crumbled though breathing in great breaths of air from the ocean that stretched almost to its feet, and refusing stubbornly to give up its semi-royal existence until, in 1698, the remorseless Nicholson tore it up by the roots and

transplanted the ancient shoot to Williamsburg, a few miles inland.

The Virginia of John Smith, of Sir Francis Wyatt, of the fiery Berkeley, the tragic Virginia of Powhatan, the Lady Pocahontas, and Nathaniel Bacon, began and ended about the spacious bays and rivers amid which Jamestown sat enthroned, looking wistfully over its blue waters, seemingly perplexed at its own turbulent existence.

Then, as the advancing tide of settlement and immigration marched upward and inward, toward the rippling hills that outlined the western horizon in blue, a change was made, and a new capital, the capital to be for eighty years to come, sprang up among the splendid live-oaks and lindens (planted by Dunmore) between the York and the James, in the Middle Plantation.

“Williamsburg,” says Burnaby, “is the capital of Virginia: it is situated between two creeks, one falling into James, the other into York river; and is built nearly due east and west. The distance of each landing-place is something more than a mile from the town; which, with the disadvantage of not being able to bring up large vessels, is the reason of its not having increased so fast as might have been expected. It consists of about two hundred houses, does not contain more than one thousand souls, whites and negroes; and is far from being a place of any consequence. It is regularly laid out in parallel streets, intersected by others at right angles; has a handsome square in the centre,

through which runs the principal street, one of the most spacious in North America, three quarters of a mile in length, and above a hundred feet wide. At the opposite ends of this street are two public buildings, the college and the capitol: and although the houses are of wood, covered with shingles, and but indifferently built, the whole makes a handsome appearance. There are few public edifices that deserve to be taken notice of; those, which I have mentioned, are the principal; and they are far from being magnificent. The governor's palace is tolerably good, one of the best upon the continent; but the church, the prison, and the other buildings, are all of them extremely indifferent. The streets are not paved, and are consequently very dusty, the soil hereabout consisting chiefly of sand: however, the situation of Williamsburg has one advantage which few or no places in these lower parts have, that of being free from mosquitoes. Upon the whole, it is an agreeable residence; there are ten or twelve gentlemen's families constantly residing in it, besides merchants and tradesmen: and at the times of the assemblies, and general courts, it is crowded with the gentry of the country: on those occasions there are balls and other amusements; but as soon as the business is finished, they return to their plantations; and the town is in a manner deserted." <sup>1</sup>

"I arrived at Williamsburg at noon," says

<sup>1</sup> A. Burnaby, *Travels Through North America*, p. 33.

Lossing, " and proceeded immediately to search out the interesting localities of that ancient and earliest incorporated town in Virginia. They are chiefly upon the main street, a broad avenue pleasantly shaded, and almost as quiet as a rural lane. I first took a hasty stroll upon the spacious green in front of William and Mary College, the oldest literary institution in America except Harvard University. The entrance to the green is flanked by stately live-oaks, cheering the visitor in winter with their ever-green foliage. In the centre of the green stands the mutilated statue of Lord Botetourt, the best beloved of the colonial governors. This statue was erected in the old capitol in 1774, and in 1797 it was removed to its present position. I did not make a sketch of it, because a student at the college promised to hand me one made by his own pencil before I left the place. He neglected to do so, and therefore I can give nothing pictorially of 'the good Governor Botetourt,' the predecessor of Dunmore.

"I next visited the remains of the palace of Lord Dunmore, the last royal governor of Virginia. It is situated at the head of a broad and beautiful court, extending northward from the main street, in front of the City Hotel. The palace was constructed of brick. The centre building was accidentally destroyed by fire, while occupied by the French troops immediately after the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown. It was seventy-four feet long and sixty-eight feet wide, and occupied the site of the old palace of Governor Spotswood, at the beginning of the eighteenth century. At-

tached to the palace were three hundred and sixty acres of land, beautifully laid out in gardens, parks, carriage-ways, and a bowling-green. Dunmore imported some fine linden-trees from Scotland, one of which, still in existence, is one of the finest specimens of that tree I have ever seen. In vice-regal pomp and pageantry Dunmore attempted to *reign* among the plain republicans of Virginia; but his day of grandeur and power soon passed away, and the sun of his official glory set amid darkest clouds. All that remains of this spacious edifice are the two wings; the one on the right was the office, the one on the left was the guard-house."

"A little eastward of Palace Street or Court, is the public square, on which area are two relics of the olden time, *Bruton Church*, a cruciform structure with a steeple, and the old *Magazine*, an octagon building, erected during the administration of Governor Spotswood. The sides of the latter are each twelve feet in horizontal extent. Surrounding it, also in octagon form, is a massive brick wall, which was constructed when the building was erected. This wall is somewhat dilapidated. The building was occupied as a Baptist meeting-house when I visited Williamsburg, and I trust it may never fall before the hand of improvement, for it has an historical value in the minds of all Americans. The events which hallow it will be noticed presently.

"On the square fronting the magazine is the courthouse. It stands upon the site of the old capitol, in which occurred many interesting events connected with the history of our War for Independence. The present structure was erected over the ashes of the old one, which was burned in 1832. Around it are a few of the

old bricks, half buried in the green sward, and these compose the only remains of the *Old Capitol*.”<sup>1</sup>

Hugh Jones says :

“ The first *Metropolis*, *James Town*, was built in the most convenient Place for Trade and Security against the *Indians*, but often received much Damage, being twice burnt down ; after which it never recovered its Perfection, consisting at present of nothing but Abundance of Brick Rubbish, and three or four good inhabited Houses, tho’ the Parish is of pretty large Extent, but less than others. When the *State House* and *Prison* were burnt down, *Governor Nickolson* removed the Residence of the *Governor*, with the Meeting of *General Courts* and *General Assemblies* to *Middle Plantation*, seven Miles from *James Town*, in a healthier and more convenient Place, and freer from the Annoyance of *Muskettoes*.

“ Here he laid out the *City of Williamsburgh* (in the Form of a Cypher, made of *W.* and *M.*) on a Ridge at the Head Springs of two great *Creeks*, one running into *James*, and the other into *York River*, which are each navigable for sloops, within a Mile of the Town ; at the Head of which *Creeks* are good *Landings*, and *Lots* laid out, and Dwelling Houses and Ware Houses built ; so that this Town is most conveniently situated, in the Middle of the lower Part of *Virginia*, commanding two noble Rivers, not above four Miles from either, and is much more commodious and healthful, than if built upon a River.

“ Publick Buildings here of Note, are the College, the Capitol, Governor’s House, and the Church. The

<sup>1</sup> Lossing, *Field Book of the Revolution*, vol. ii, p. 262.



Latitude of the *College* at *Williamsburgh*, to the best of my Observation, is  $37^{\circ}. 21'$ . North.

“The Front which looks due *East* is double, and is 136 Foot long. It is a lofty Pile of Brick Building adorn'd with a *Cupola*. At the *North* End runs back a large Wing, which is a handsome *Hall*, answerable to which the *Chapel* is to be built; and there is a spacious *Piazza* on the *West* side, from one Wing to the other. It is approached by a good Walk, and a grand Entrance by Steps, with good Courts and Gardens about it, with a good House and Apartments for the *Indian Master* and his Scholars, and Out-Houses; and a large Pasture enclosed like a Park with about 150 Acres of Land adjoining, for occasional Uses.

“The Building is beautiful and commodious, being first modelled by Sir *Christopher Wren*, adapted to the Nature of the Country by the *Gentlemen* there; and since it was burnt down, it has been rebuilt, and nicely contrived, altered and adorned by the ingenious Direction of *Governor Spottswood*; and is not altogether unlike *Chelsea Hospital*.

“Fronting the *College* at near its whole Breadth, is extended a noble Street mathematically streight (for the first Design of the Town's Form is changed to a much better) just three Quarters of a Mile in Length; At the other End of which stands the *Capitol*, a noble, beautiful, and commodious Pile as any of its Kind, built at the Cost of the *late Queen*, and by the Direction of the *Governor*.

“The Building is in the Form of an H nearly; the *Secretary's Office*, and the *General Court* taking up one Side below Stairs; the Middle being an handsom *Portico* leading to the Clerk of the *Assembly's Office*,

and the *House of Burgesses* on the other Side; which last is not unlike the *House of Commons*.

“ In each Wing is a good Stair Case, one leading to the *Council Chamber*, where the *Governor* and *Council* sit in very great State, in Imitation of the *King* and *Council*, or the *Lord Chancellor* and *House of Lords*.

“ The whole is surrounded with a neat *Area*, encompassed with a good Wall, and near it is a strong sweet *Prison* for *Criminals*;

“ The Cause of my being so particular in describing the *Capitol* is, because it is the best and most commodious Pile of its Kind that I have seen or heard of.

“ Because the *State House*, *James Town*, and the *College* have been burnt down, therefore is prohibited in the *Capitol* the Use of Fire, Candles, and Tobacco.

“ At the *Capitol*, at publick Times, may be seen a great Number of handsome, well-dress'd, compleat Gentlemen. And at the *Governor's* House upon *Birth-Nights*, and at *Balls* and *Assemblies*, I have seen as fine an Appearance, as good Diversion, and as splendid Entertainments in *Governor Spotwood's* Time, as I have seen any where else.

“ Here dwell several very good Families, and more reside here in their own Houses at publick Times.

“ They live in the same neat Manner, dress after the same Modes, and behave themselves exactly as the *Gentry in London*; most Families of any Note having a *Coach*, *Chariot*, *Berlin*, or *Chaise*.

“ Thus they dwell comfortably, genteely, pleasantly, and plentifully in this delightful, healthful, and (I hope) thriving *City of Williamsburgh*.”<sup>1</sup>

“ The seat of our government had been originally

<sup>1</sup> Hugh Jones, *The Present State of Virginia*, p. 25.

fixed in the peninsula of Jamestown, the first settlement of the colonists; and had been afterwards removed a few miles inland to Williamsburg. But this was at a time when our settlements had not extended beyond the tide water. Now they had crossed the Alleghany; and the centre of population was very far removed from what it had been. Yet Williamsburg was still the depository of our archives, the habitual residence of the Governor and many other of the public functionaries, the established place for the sessions of the legislature, and the magazine of our military stores: and it's situation was so exposed that it might be taken at any time in war, and, at this time particularly, an enemy might in the night run up either of the rivers between which it lies, land a force above, and take possession of the place, without the possibility of saving either persons or things. I had proposed it's removal so early as Octob. '76. but it did not prevail until the session of May. '79." <sup>1</sup>

This was the year 1760, the year in which Patrick Henry—aged twenty-four—went to Williamsburg to be examined in the law, and narrowly escaped being “plucked” by the board of examiners, who happened to be a famous group—Peyton and John Randolph (attorney-general), George Wythe, and Robert Carter Nicholas. Jefferson had only lately become a matriculate. His first letter in Ford's edition of his voluminous correspondence—probably the first of the twenty-five or thirty thousand letters still surviving—was devoted to this subject.

<sup>1</sup> P. L. Ford, *Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. i, p. 55.

“ TO JOHN HARVEY

“ Shadwell, Jan. 14, 1760.

“ SIR,—I was at Colo. Peter Randolph’s about a Fortnight ago, and my Schooling falling into Discourse, he said he thought it would be to my Advantage to go to the College, and was desirous I should go, as indeed I am myself for several Reasons. In the first place as long as I stay at the Mountains The Loss of one fourth of my Time is inevitable, by Company’s coming here and detaining me from School. And likewise my Absence will in a great Measure put a Stop to so much Company, and by that Means lessen the Expences of the Estate in House-Keeping. And on the other Hand by going to the College, I shall get a more universal Acquaintance, which may hereafter be serviceable to me; and I suppose I can pursue my Studies in the Greek and Latin as well there as here, and likewise learn something of the Mathematics. I shall be glad of your opinion.”<sup>1</sup>

From the very beginning, Old Williamsburg had been wrapped in a literary and legal flavour—“Devilsburg,” Jefferson playfully calls it in his letters to John Page, in allusion to the *ennui* he suffered there, or to the tricky pranks of the students, wishing “Coke, the dull old scoundrel, at the devil” when the image of the fair “Belinda” (Rebecca Burwell) dances teasingly before his imagination. The Orange and the Stuart were amicably wound together in the architectural cypher of W and M, in the shape of which the elder town

<sup>1</sup> P. L. Ford, *Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. i, p. 340.



WASHINGTON CROSSING THE DELAWARE



had been originally laid out; its ancient library was full of books and MSS., presented by kings, archbishops, bishops, and scholars; the name of the famous Robert Boyle was inseparably connected with its Indian school, and generous donations were made to it by Government, in consideration of two copies of Latin verses annually prepared and presented to it by the President and Fellows.

Far back in the grey years of the seventeenth century—in 1693, when Voltaire was still unborn, and Racine was not far from his death-bed—the College of William and Mary had been founded by a royal grant of twenty thousand acres of good Virginia land and £1985 in money, while an ample tax on tobacco (the crowned weed, blazoned on the earliest colonial seal of Virginia), and abundant fees from the land-surveyor's office were added, in perpetuity, to maintain the president and six professors. The gifts and remembrances of the charitable, interested in Indian and colonial education, flowed into the coffers of the college, which, in 1776, had risen to be the richest in North America. Younger than Harvard by a few months only, it soon grew to be a living and audacious refutation of the view of that choleric old "Know Nothing," Sir William Berkeley, who not long before its foundation had written home to London:

"The same course is taken here, for instructing the people, as there is in England: Out of towns every man instructs his own children according to his own

ability. We have forty-eight parishes, and our ministers are well paid, and by my consent should be better, if they would pray oftener, and preach less. But as of all commodities, so of this, the worst are sent to us, and we have few that we can boast of, since the persecution in Cromwell's tyranny drove divers worthy men thither. Yet, I thank God, there are no free schools nor printing; and I hope we shall not have these hundred years. For learning has brought disobedience, and heresy, and sects, into the world, and printing has divulged them and libels against the best governments; God keep us from both!

“WILLIAM BERKELEY.

“VIRGINIA, 20 *June*, 1671.”

Gutenberg and Faust might turn in their graves for all the old Governor cared, if only “Virginia, earth's only Paradise,” as Drayton sang in his famous ode, remained free from their “pesky” invention. The pink-blossomed tobacco, that waved like an emerald sea in and around the Virginia plantations; the hogshead of generous liquors, imported from vine-clad tropic islands; the skins and furs that clothed in velvet the thousands of shy sylvan creatures that roamed the Virginian woods, were to coin themselves into golden pence and pounds, and still more golden brains of men to become for 'ever celebrated in the annals of the New World.

Old William and Mary arose, a daring incarnation of the resentment felt at the bluster of this vice-regal tyrant who ruled Virginia with a rod of iron, and wrote testy communications to the officials at



St. James's on the "state" of the colony. Out of its portals, streamed in the course of time, no less than four hundred alumni who distinguished themselves in all the walks of life—three presidents of the United States, four signers of the Declaration, five Judges of the Supreme Court, sixteen United States senators, four speakers of the House of Representatives. The brilliant and speaking likenesses that graced the chapel and library walls, executed by the brushes of famous artists, were hardly more remarkable than the groups of illustrious men who, in silken hose and powdered hair, in cap and gown and velvet doublet, gathered in picture-like twos and threes about the shady promenades of the palace grounds, in the H-shaped precincts of the ancient House of Burgesses, or at the memorable fire-side *conversazioni* in the Apollo Room of the old Raleigh Tavern.

From generation to generation old Virginia presented herself at the Chancellor's office of William and Mary College, and became duly matriculated as the intellectual guest of "the Nestor of American Colleges." Hither, George Washington came as a mere lad to get his land-surveyor's license, to be followed in a few years by Thomas Jefferson and Zachary Taylor (grandfather of the President) on the same errand. Here, the intellect of John Marshall was refined to that wondrous judgment, which impelled an eminent historian<sup>1</sup> to

<sup>1</sup> John Fiske.

include him with those other Virginians—Washington, Jefferson, Madison—among the five men (Hamilton being the fifth) who were the soul of the Revolution. Peyton Randolph, president of the first Continental Congress in 1774, had, doubtless, presided over many a boyish debate in the college where Lord Botetourt had established gold medals for Latin oratory, and prizes for attendance on chapel, before he assumed the august rôle of presiding officer of this celebrated assembly.

Many a venerable oak on the college green, or in the vicinity of the quaint "Powder Horn," or at the corners of what was afterwards called Lord Dunmore's Palace (built in the year Washington was born) must have rustled sympathetically in Dodona fashion, as the young gallants walked to and fro beneath them after the gorgeous balls at the governor's and talked "treason" of the Patrick Henry type, discussed the "Writs of Assistance" and the impending Stamp Act, composed epigrams in the style of Colonel William Byrd, or translated bits of Ovid in the fluent fashion of George Sandys. The unpaved streets of the venerable burgh would become a veritable Campo Santo of colonial legend, if their dust could become articulate, and whisper the secrets buried in the yellow sand of the Middle Plantation—the secrets of the "Virginia Comedians" who presented there, in the primitive playhouse, the latest "thing" from Vauxhall—the secrets that now piled themselves mountain-high during the administrations of Nicholson, and Spots-

wood, "Knight of the Golden Horse Shoe," Gooch and Dinwiddie, and smiling Botetourt and bitter-tongued Dunmore, who burnt himself into Virginia's memory deeper than any other governor, through his devastation of Norfolk.

This noble old Williamsburg, of high descent and lofty lineage, formed the jewelled clasp between the old and the new Virginia, between blood-stained Jamestown, the first capital, and civic Richmond, whither the capital was removed in 1779. Never, perhaps, in its palmyest days possessing a population of more than twenty-five hundred, the city of William and Mary enjoys a political distinction unparalleled in the history of the United States. For eighty years, moreover, its beaux and belles made of it the social "cynosure of all eyes," "the glass of fashion and the mould of form," a small woodland Versailles, where a miniature court flitted hither and thither on its vice-regal nothings, a busybody world of gay triviality and harmless gossip where, betweenwhiles, Shawnees and Mingoës and Delawares are to be educated on Boyle's foundation (immediately to relapse into barbarism as soon as they returned to their native forests, remarks "that merry old Virginian," Colonel Byrd). Colonel and Mrs. Washington and their charming children left the stately mansion of Mount Vernon many a time, between 1760 and 1774, to take part in the pomp and pageantry of the vice-regal court, "step the minuet" in company with Fauquier, courteous Botetourt, or the Earl and Countess of Dunmore, or prance on

thoroughbred horses about the Williamsburg lanes and roads, fragrant, in season, with golden mantle of yellow jessamine, loops and ropes of flowering grape, or sheets of goldenrod flinging its yellow dust to the wind.

The Colonel, doubtless, kept a watchful eye on the fashions of the Middle Plantation gentry, appeared in his "genteel suit of superfine broadcloth," made the sagacious observation to his London correspondent that, "whatever might be the reason, *his* clothes had never fitted him," no doubt made mental comparisons between himself and the elegantly fitted *preux chevaliers* of the court, and then proceeded to order those curious and dainty things for the two "Patsys," in which his circumstantial invoices abound.

All this aristocracy and education of the planters' commonwealth were thus held, socially and politically, together by the "jewelled clasp," for here assembled the hundred or so fresh-cheeked, high-coloured representatives of the 150,000 white Virginians, who had then spread themselves over the rural infinitude called "Virginia"; here, a never-ending succession of burgesses and their wives and daughters gathered in the seasons of assembly, and contributed a brilliant society of which one catches piquant glimpses in Fithian's Diary; incipient "Sons of Liberty" began to sound their alarumbells of resistance and revolution as the decades moved swiftly along; and hither, one day, trotted on his forest-bred nag a young man from Hanover

County who, after one month's study of Coke on Littleton, and the Virginia Statutes, had the impudence to present himself for examination in the law.

This was the kinsman of Lord Brougham, and Robertson the historian, Patrick Henry, an ill-clad, gawky, wild-eyed but genial son of the woods, of very definite kindred (as it seemed, afterward) but undefined ambition, by no means the "Jamestown diamond" even his friends, at first, took him to be, yet unpromising in the extreme to look at.

Four years younger than Washington, seven years younger than Jefferson, Henry was frequently in the latter's company, as Jefferson pursued his two years' course at the college, and, doubtless, often enough met Washington, when the Boanerges of Hanover County entered the House of Burgesses in 1765.

A more illustrious triumvirate, America has never had to show—the Arm, the Pen, the Voice of the Revolution.

The genius of a Plutarch would be required to characterise these three men in such lines of fire as they deserve. As they calmly walked the three quarters of a mile that covered the Duke of Gloucester Street, from the "beautiful and commodious" capitol (as old Hugh Jones described it) to the spacious green in front of the college, discussing the Parson's case or Charles Townshend's Revenue Acts, or the constantly up-flaming Stamp Act, or the 20,000,000 of dollars the French and Indian

wars had already cost the colonies, no one could have predicted, that the tallest of the three young men would become the first man of his age, the second would write the document that was to become the creed and classic of all modern republics, and the third would incarnate the very voice of Revolution itself, and send it like a trail of fire from one end of the land to the other, never to be extinguished. A vast potentiality lay latent in the three, for two of those unpretending burgesses were to sit in the presidential chair, two were to become governors of the commonwealth, and one was to be the first American Governor of Virginia elected by the suffrages of his fellow-citizens. The three summed up in themselves the essence of the whole "American question," then germinating in subterranean ways all over the country: Jefferson the student, wondrously learned, wise, discriminating, absolutely without the "gift of gab" which his friend Henry possessed in such opulence, faltering and confused when he got up on his legs, yet even then in possession of that eloquence of diction, which made John Adams insist on his writing the Declaration of Independence; Washington, the man of action, strenuous, stern, falteringly modest in speech when he stood in legislature or congress, yet thrilling with vital force when he stood on the field of battle, and "swearing like an angel from Heaven" when things went wrong (so his friend General Charles Scott reported)—patient, silent, reserved, except when the inner volcanic flame burst through

his flashing eyes in some stupendous conflict; Henry, the "forest-born Demosthenes," whose impassioned nature had gathered up into itself all the sweet, wild strength of the woods and winds and wilderness, to break forth some day in marvellously musical words, and the play of a "wonder-working fancy."

And when one considers, that these were but three of the wonderful men who then frequented the goodly foundation of William and Mary, specimens of the splendid men whose souls Seymour, Attorney-general of Great Britain, had consigned to perdition, when worthy Master Blair had applied to him for a charter: meekly affirming that they too—the Virginians—had souls to save: "Souls? souls? D—— their souls! let them make tobacco!"—when we consider that the old brick palace of Dunmore and the Raleigh Tavern rooms, the council-chamber and the college lecture-rooms, the very sanctuaries of old Bruton Church (built in 1700) and the "miniature Westminster Abbey" of the chapel, had resounded with the voices and presence of scores of such men, it is well to pause a moment, and remember that it was the Williamsburg spirit that largely ruled the Revolutionary conventions, that wrote the declaration of rights, that defied the fleets and armies of Great Britain, and that brought the mighty struggle to a glorious end. Yorktown and Williamsburg were never more than a few miles apart, yet in their spirit they were absolutely joined.

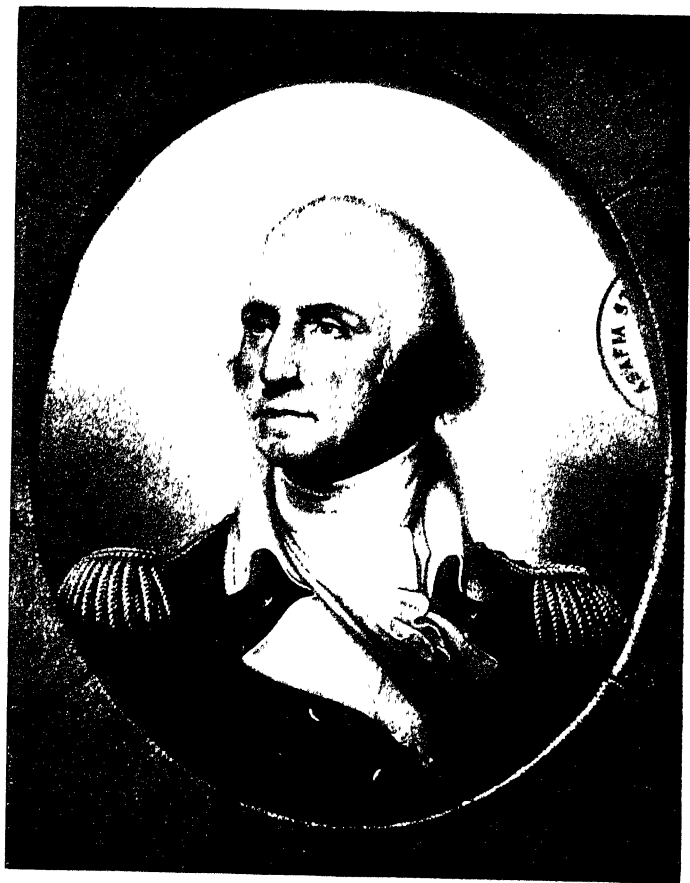
It is no wonder, then, that the capitol at Williams-

burg where the burgesses met was stigmatised as "the heart of rebellion," and that the foe thought to tear out this heart in Tarleton's time when American, English, and French troops successively occupied the beautifully laid-out grounds of the palace.

Then the migrant capital moved to Richmond, in 1779, when Jefferson was governor, and housed itself in the picturesque city near the falls of the James, which Colonel Byrd of Westover had founded more than forty years before. The James, bursting over the foaming rocks above the lovely site of the present Hollywood, fitly symbolised the agitation of the times, while its expansion below into a broad and noble river, where giant battleships were to shoot down the launchways at busy Hampton Roads, prophetically suggested the broadening currents of Virginia history, and its expansion into a world-influence.

Call it a chrism, call it a curse, fire was the element that stuck closer than a brother to Williamsburg, from the first—fire of speech, fire of eloquence; fiery tongues actually seemed to hover, incandescent, over the hundred burgesses, and sting and quicken them into imprudent speech; and actual flames, crude, destructive, terrible, scourged the place from the year 1705 to the year 1861, when Federal troops burnt the venerable college buildings, and relic-hunters tore away the metal inscription from the pedestal of beloved Lord Botetourt's statue. It was conceived and born out of the great intellectual





GEORGE WASHINGTON.

From the painting by Rembrandt Peale. Reproduced by permission of C. Klackner, N. Y.  
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conflagration of 1688, and it continued to burn in one way or another, actually or metaphorically, all through its history, its very ashes possessing an incandescent character that flamed up anew, as soon as some accident (like that of the French occupation in 1781) or incendiary torch had laid this or that one of its monumental buildings in the dust. It stood for the Truth, which cannot be burned, for Liberty, which is indestructible, for Culture, which can never die; for here, in 1776, originated the Phi Beta Kappa Society in its parent chapter, and straight from Williamsburg went Thomas Jefferson, full of his idea of founding a great State University, realised in 1825, by the opening of the University of Virginia while he was yet alive.

Generation after generation of scholars in their caps and gowns, since the first commencement in 1700, have for two hundred years streamed out of the portals of William and Mary College, illustrating every walk of life—science, law, history, literature, divinity, the arts; their lofty, independent spirit animated the debates of Congress, when a congress came to be; the law-books in the rich old library, where precious volumes shone resplendent with the coats-of-arms of royal governors and generous donors,—especially the volumes on English constitutional law,—became vitally incarnate, and were born to vivid resurrection in the form of Peyton and Edmund and John Randolph, George Wythe and Edmund Pendleton, Richard Bland, Robert

Carter Nicholas, Jefferson, Henry, and scores of others.

In these men, the types of the Revolution reached their most finished mould, and stand forth, a brilliant gallery of faces, unexampled for strength, originality, genius, and energy, only paralleled by the group of gladiators who, almost at this moment, stood on the other side of the sea, like some marble group of monumental sculpture, and defended the same constitutional principles for which the Americans fought—Burke, Chatham, and Fox. A mighty spirit of freedom was welling up from the very earth in North America, and finding lips and voices in Massachusetts, in New York, in Pennsylvania, and, above all, in Virginia, whose warm blood had always bubbled and battled for freedom, and at last poured itself out freely on a hundred battle-fields, in defence of constitutional rights.

“I have never had a will of my own,” wrote Washington to Colonel Bouquet, “where a duty was demanded of me”; and this sublime sense of duty actuated Washington’s contemporaries almost to a man. The ancient charters and privileges of the colonies breathed the same spirit of broad humanitarianism and brotherhood, and the obligation to help savage and civilised alike, as far as it was possible to help them; and the very foundation of William and Mary College, and the wealth that flowed to it, rooted themselves in the same lofty philanthropies, the same recognition of the primal

rights of man. The Indian queen, holding forth her twig of tobacco leaf and blossom, blazoned on the early colonial seal, typified not only a mighty gift of alleviation to mankind, but the right of a noble, uncivilised race to advance to the foot of the throne, and claim succour from an enlightened sovereign.

When the gay cavalcade of the "Knights of the Golden Horse Shoe" trotted out of Old Williamsburg, under the gallant Spotswood, and climbed the Alleghanies, they peered over and out from their "peak of Darien," into the illimitable region where Washington later saw thousands and tens of thousands of buffalo, soon to be replaced by the millions of human beings, who had drawn their blood and culture from such institutions as this venerable college, and were soon to spread, like a sea, over the region which one of the famous trio before mentioned was to gain for the United States, in 1804, forty years from the period under consideration; and over all this the benign sun of mutual recognition, sovereign personal right, and individual conscience was to shine.

Graphically has John Esten Cooke pictured the force and influence of this one institution, when he says:

"Almost every Virginian of any eminence in the eighteenth century had been trained for his work in the world within its walls. It gave twenty-seven of its students to the army in the Revolution; two Attorney-Generals to the United States; it sent out nearly twenty

members of Congress, fifteen United States Senators, seventeen Governors, thirty-seven Judges, a Lieutenant-General and other high officers to the army, two Commodores to the navy, twelve Professors, four signers of the Declaration of Independence, seven Cabinet officers, the chief draughtsman and author of the Constitution, Edmund Randolph, the most eminent of the Chief Justices, John Marshall, and three Presidents of the United States. And this list, honorable as it is, by no means exhausts the number of really eminent and influential men who owed the formation and development of their intellects and characters to 'William and Mary.' In the long list of students, preserved from the year 1720 to the present time, will be found a great array of names holding a very high rank in the commonwealth of Virginia and the States of the South and West—in the pulpit, at the bar, and in the local legislatures. These, without attaining the eminence of those first mentioned, were the most prominent citizens of the communities in which they lived, and were chiefly instrumental in giving character and direction to social and political affairs. One and all, they received from their education at the old ante-revolutionary college the stamp and mould of character which made them able and valuable citizens—leaders, indeed, in opinion and action, whenever intellect and virtue were needed for important public affairs.”<sup>1</sup>

Of the vanished life of the place, Bishop Meade wrote:

“Williamsburg was once the miniature copy of the Court of St. James, somewhat aping the manners of

<sup>1</sup> *Scribner's Monthly*, November, 1875, p. 1.

that royal place, while the old church grave-yard and the college chapel were—*si licet cum magnis componere parva*—the Westminster Abbey and the St. Paul's of London, where the great ones were interred. The first person who came to sleep beneath the pavement of this American Westminster Abbey was Sir John Randolph, who had espoused the English side during the Revolution and gone into exile; and he was followed by his two sons, John Randolph, formerly the King's Attorney-General, and Peyton Randolph, President of the first Congress, and by Bishop Madison, first Bishop of Virginia; Chancellor Nelson, and it is believed Lord Botetourt, the royal governor, whose statue was in 1797 placed upon the college green. Botetourt had been a warm friend of the Virginians and the Virginia college; and, as he had expressed a desire to be buried in the colony, his friend, the Duke of Beaufort, wrote, after his death, requesting that 'the president, etc., of the college will permit me to erect a monument near the place where he was buried.' This phrase is supposed to indicate that the old chapel of William and Mary contained the last remains of the most popular and beloved of the royal governors."<sup>1</sup>

The associations of the old capitol grow more piquant and complicated as one advances into its story, tangled as the original cypher-monogram of the plan on which it was originally laid out.

Says Cooke:

"Old Bruton Church was for a long time the resort of the students on days of public worship. At the Old Capitol they witnessed the determined stand made by

<sup>1</sup> *Scribner's Monthly*, November, 1875, p. 7.

the Burgesses against the encroachments of the Crown. At the Old Palace they appeared annually on the 5th of November to present their copies of Latin verses to the Governor, as the representative of the King of England, the head of the institution. At the old Raleigh Tavern they met to found the Phi Beta Kappa Society, or to join in the festivities of the fine assemblies held in the historic 'Apollo Room' in the building. When the revolutionary outburst came, the great drama was played before them, and they mingled in their 'academical dresses' with the crowds which cheered the worthy Lord Botetourt as he rode in his fine chariot, drawn by six white horses, to the Capitol, or hooted the unpopular Lord Dunmore as he fled to his man-of-war in the river after rifling the Old Magazine of its powder.

"Bruton Church, which is still standing, is one of the oldest of these historic buildings, and took its name from the parish—the college having been built, it will be remembered, on land 'lying and being in the parish of Bruton.' It was erected in 1678, and became a prominent feature of the colonial capital—a sort of miniature St. Paul's. The Royal Governor had his fine pew there under its canopy, and around him on Sunday were grouped the most distinguished citizens of the place, the Councilors, Judges, and Burgesses. The old Bruton Church Communion Service is still in existence. The cup and paten are of gold, and were presented to the church by Sir John Page. The flagon, chalice, and plate are of silver, and were presented by King George III., whose coat-of-arms is carved upon them."<sup>1</sup>

The second capitol became famous after the de-

<sup>1</sup> *Scribner's Monthly*, November, 1875, p. 10.



struction, by fire, of the first. Several of the scenes it witnessed are described by Cooke :

“ The second building soon took its place, and witnessed the tumultuous scenes of 1774 and the succeeding years. It had already echoed with the thunders of the great debate on the Stamp Act in 1765, when Patrick Henry, a raw countryman, startled the Burgesses with his grand outburst, ‘ Cæsar had his Brutus,’ etc., with which all are familiar. In the lobby, listening, was a young student of William and Mary College, named Thomas Jefferson, who afterward characterised the debate as most ‘ bloody,’ and described the sudden appearance of Edmund Randolph, as he came out of the Chamber, declaring, with a violent oath, that he would have given five hundred guineas for a single vote, which it seems would have defeated the famous resolutions of Henry. The Old Capitol was the scene of all the grand official pageants of that time. The royal governors, always fond of imitating regal proceedings, had the habit of riding from the ‘ Palace ’ to the Capitol in their coaches drawn by four or even six horses, aiming thus to dazzle the eyes of the ‘ provincials ’; and, once enthroned in their Council Chamber, they seem to have felt that for the moment they were the real Kings of Virginia. The old chronicles leave no doubt of the lordly deportment of the royal governors on these occasions. ‘ Yesterday, between three and four o’clock P.M.,’ says the *Virginia Gazette* for May 27, 1774, ‘ the Right Honourable the Earl of Dunmore sent a message to the Honourable the House of Burgesses, by the Clerk of the Council, requiring their immediate attendance in the Council Chamber, when his Excellency spoke to them as follows.’ His address was that of Charles I. to

his parliament, demanding the five members. The Burgesses had 'reflected' on the King and Parliament, and were sternly declared to be 'dissolved.' And the men who were thus imperiously addressed, who were dismissed by his Lordship with marks of his cold displeasure, as a schoolmaster dismisses his schoolboys, were Jefferson, Henry, Mason, and Pendleton—the greatest names, in a word, of the time.”<sup>1</sup>

Thus was old Williamsburg intertwined, like its own monogram, with every fibre of the ancient commonwealth's life, the focus and fountain of that life which now began to play in a dazzling stream of new forces, kindling, creative, illuminative, a measureless energy which, when turned into light, became a Niagara whose splendour and revelry were seen and heard to the ends of the earth. The era of the New Forces had dawned.

<sup>1</sup> *Scribner's Monthly*, November, 1875, p. 11.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE NEW FORCES

ON the 20th of September, 1765, Washington wrote to Francis Dandridge, his wife's uncle, in London:

“At present few things are under notice of my observation that can afford you any amusement in the recital. The Stamp Act, imposed on the colonies by the Parliament of Great Britain, engrosses the conversation of the speculative part of the colonists, who look upon this unconstitutional method of taxation, as a direful attack upon their liberties, and loudly exclaim against the violation. What may be the result of this, and of some other (I think I may add) ill-judged measures, I will not undertake to determine; but this I may venture to affirm, that the advantage accruing to the mother country will fall greatly short of the expectations of the ministry; for certain it is, that our whole substance does already in a manner flow to Great Britain and that whatsoever contributes to lessen our importations must be hurtful to their manufacturers. And the eyes of our people, already beginning to open, will perceive, that many luxuries, which we lavish our substance in Great Britain for, can well be dispensed with, whilst the necessities of life are (mostly) to be had within ourselves. This, consequently, will introduce frugality, and be a necessary stimulation to industry. If Great Britain, therefore, loads her manu-

facturies with heavy taxes, will it not facilitate these measures? They will not compel us, I think, to give our money for their exports, whether we will or not; and certain I am, none of their traders will part from them without a valuable consideration. Where, then, is the utility of these restrictions?

“As to the Stamp Act, taken in a single view, one and the first bad consequence attending it, I take to be this, our courts of judicature must inevitably be shut up; for it is impossible (or next of kin to it), under our present circumstances, that the act of Parliament can be complied with, were we ever so willing to enforce the execution; for, not to say, which alone would be sufficient, that we have not money to pay the stamps, there are many other cogent reasons, to prevent it; and if a stop be put to our judicial proceedings, I fancy the merchants of Great Britain, trading to the colonies, will not be among the last to wish for a repeal of it.”<sup>1</sup>

Two years later, in 1767, he wrote to Capel & Osgood Hanbury:

“Unseasonable as it may be, to take any notice of the repeal of the Stamp Act at this time, yet I cannot help observing, that a contrary measure would have introduced very unhappy consequences. Those, therefore, who wisely foresaw such an event, and were instrumental in procuring the repeal of the act, are, in my opinion, deservedly entitled to the thanks of the well-wishers to Britain and her colonies, and must reflect with pleasure, that, through their means, many scenes of confusion and distress have been prevented. Mine they accordingly have, and always shall have, for

<sup>1</sup> Ford, *Writings of George Washington*, vol. ii, pp. 209-210.

their opposition to any act of oppression; and that act could be looked upon in no other light by every person, who would view it in its proper colors.

“I could wish it was in my power to congratulate you on the success in having the commercial system of these colonies put upon a more enlarged and extensive footing, than it is; because I am well satisfied, that it would ultimately redound to the advantage of the mother country, so long as the colonies pursue trade and agriculture, and would be an effectual let to manufacturing among them. The money, therefore which they raise, would centre in Great Britain, as certainly as the needle will settle to the pole.”<sup>1</sup>

Washington to Robert Cary, 21 July, 1767:

“The repeal of the Stamp Act, to whatsoever cause owing, ought much to be rejoiced at, for had the Parliament of Great Britain resolved upon enforcing it, the consequences, I conceive, would have been more direful than is generally apprehended, both to the mother country and her colonies. All, therefore, who were instrumental in procuring the repeal, are entitled to the thanks of every British subject, and have mine cordially.”<sup>2</sup>

Governor Fauquier to Earl of Halifax, June 14, 1765:

“Government is set at defiance, not having strength enough in her hands to enforce obedience to the laws of the community. The private distress which every

<sup>1</sup> Ford, *Writings of George Washington*, vol. ii, p. 210, note.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 211, note.

man feels, increases the general dissatisfaction at the duties laid by the stamp act, which breaks out, and shews itself upon every trifling occasion.”<sup>1</sup>

“This engrossing topic of conversation” had, indeed, “engaged all the speculative minds in the colonies” with a preoccupation that was never again to leave it.

“This is the way,” wrote John Hughes, in Bancroft,<sup>1</sup> “that the fire began.” “Virginia rang the alarm-bell for the continent,” cried Bernard to Halifax. “Virginians fired the hearts of patriots with an eloquence which defied royal prerogatives and patronage, and set the seal of lasting pre-eminence on William and Mary, the venerable Nestor of American colleges, in which they had imbibed the highest principles of liberty, both of thought and of actions.”

“Virginia has the glory,” said John Adams, “with posterity of beginning with the resolutions against the stamp act, and ending, with the acts of the convention of May, 1786, the great American Revolution.”

The Stamp Act, indeed, was but the topmost crest of that ocean of unrest that was now sweeping over the colonies. These infant commonwealths had grown from shiploads to plantations or settlement-groups, crowned and accentuated by a church spire; from these to “hundreds,” counties, parishes, pre-

<sup>1</sup> Ford, *Writings of George Washington*, vol. ii, p. 210, note.

<sup>2</sup> Bancroft, *History of the United States*, vol. v, p. 278.

cincts over which vestries or selectmen ruled in ancient English wise by free elective franchise; and there ensued the swift growth and amalgamation of disunited and ever warring units, heterogeneous beyond compare, into united and harmonious wholes, whose integrity was every day becoming more dense and indivisible. Whatever differences of creed, of culture, of race, or of religion might have existed when the Pilgrim pioneers first set foot on American soil, fast obliterated themselves in the new conditions, and became as indistinguishable in the new life as the track of tossing and floating gulls on the water. Left by their careless mother sternly to themselves, these luckless children struck out for themselves, and like strong swimmers reached whatever land lay next before them, in their own individual way.

Even so the beehives of ancient Greece had sent out their swarms of bees over the busy Mediterranean, and built up thriving commonwealths, connected by the thin thread of the "metropolis" city, among the beautiful isles or palm-fringed shores of Ionia, Sicily, Corcyra, or Iberia. The thousands that slipped from English ports into the unknown seas seemed at first to have slipped into an under-world, unimaginably great, and dark, whence never again would they rise to the yearning eyes of the mother on the English shore.

Here again the charming story of Alpheus and Arethusa was repeated; what disappeared under sea as sluggish Alpheus, in far-off Peloponnesus,

reappeared in sunny Sicily as Arethusa, the sparkling fountain of crystal water that suggested the Fountain of Perpetual Youth. The outcast children, self-exiled, or independent rovers as they might be, came to themselves on the other side of the Atlantic in a new and original light, and developed a type of which one, singling out a group of them, said: "They are men, and they are noble spirits, those Virginians!"

Equally "noble" were the men of Massachusetts, one of whom had uttered this honourable phrase, when he heard of the part played by Patrick Henry before the burgesses in 1765.

This part, indeed, was merely the part now being played by the whole American people, by the three millions of American freemen who found their mouthpiece in the eloquent Virginian; and the true key-note of the situation rang out in clear tones, when this incarnation of spontaneous civil and intellectual freedom exclaimed, a few years later, on the floor of Congress: "I am not a Virginian—I am an American!" an utterance as striking in its way as the celebrated humanitarian *Homo sum* of Terence.

And the finest commentary on this sentiment is found in the almost contemporary saying of Frederick the Great: "Kings are nothing but men, and all men are equal," a saying which constituted one drop—and that the most vital—of the complex ink out of which flowed Jefferson's masterpiece.





WASHINGTON'S COAT-OF-ARMS.



The Age of Doubt, of scepticism in Church and State, of tolerance of intolerance was at hand, and it was strange that its gigantic forces should begin first to play on the sensitive organisations of the children of the West, those youth of the world, at play and at work in the huge wilderness of Canada and the Ohio, where the ring of the axe, not of the epigram, was most to be heard, and when men were, supposedly, busy rather in sheltering their heads than saving their souls.

And yet what is more conducive to contemplative reverie, to the inflowing "crafts and assaults" of the spirit of Mephistopheles, to the universal "spirit that says No!" than the limitless stretches of the woods, the silence and solitude of the primeval savannah, the noiseless march of majestic rivers that never give an articulate answer to any question, but flow on for ever in monstrous fatalism, dumb, implacable, silent!

And this spirit of Mephistopheles, quickly recognised, and indelibly sculptured by Goethe into the massive structure of his matchless poem, was the actuating spirit of the century in which the United States were born. The mocking, scoffing, questioning interrogation that trickled from the pen of Voltaire, D'Alembert, Diderot, and the Encyclopedists was delicately etherealised by wit and humour and sarcasm now reflected in every face, as in the thousand bits of a shivered mirror, spread over Europe like a subtle atmosphere, crossed the ocean, and penetrated to the very citadel of Protestantism and the

Roman faith alike, in Canada and the Saxon colonies. The woodman, as his axe flashed through the heart of the falling oak; the *voyageur*, as he shot down the lonely river and sang the pathetic *chansons* of France; the selectman, hurrying to meeting-house or primitive council-hall; the piazza politician, sipping his toddy, spreading his legs, and discussing constitutional questions on the spacious verandahs of open-air Virginia; even the stubborn peasant of Pennsylvania and the Quaker, intrenched in his stronghold of impregnable peace, felt the stress of the time and thrilled unequivocally with the sensation of foreshadowing change.

"*Vincit qui patitur*," reads the motto of one of the most illustrious of the old James River families,<sup>1</sup> core and centre of the English civilisation in Virginia: "He conquers who is patient": a motto almost ironical in its application to America at this date. Impatience had been from the very start the keynote of life in the colonies—impatience of restraint, impatience of royal governors and administrative councils, impatience of this or that impost-tax whether native or foreign, impatience of the slow and intolerable delays of leisurely legislatures, prolonging or postponing salutary measures of pressing importance, impatience generated by the endless nuisances of the slowly-dragging Indian wars. Already a noticeable feature of American life had become its quicker heart-beat, the swift and powerful

<sup>1</sup> William Henry Harrison and Benjamin Harrison, presidents of the United States.

flow of its blood in lungs and arteries, oxygenated by the new and pungent air of a new hemisphere. Up to the time of incipient Revolution—the period we have now reached—this impatience had taken a physical turn: the “Colossus of the West” was exercising its babyhood in muscular activities, in huge sprawling through the wood, in uncouth cries and antics of pure physical exhilaration, in battling defiantly against the giant forces of nature with which it had to contend: in marrying wives and getting children,—“Go home and get children!” wrote Franklin from London a little later,—building homes, and clearing settlements. The joy of possession had become the supreme joy: every man was, so to speak, a King’s tenant, paying a quit-rent for his land to the Crown, and ruling his log-cabin, his palisadoed enclosure, his farm, or his plantation as proudly as the barons of England ruled their castles, or the Lords of the Loire their battlemented *châteaux*. The very abundance of the liberties they enjoyed had swollen the spirit of independence in these people of the wood to an imperious pride, presumptuous in its attitude of fearless criticism, ready at a moment’s notice to take offence at innovation or injustice, unequal in the extreme to the maintenance of a mental equilibrium, in which older or more philosophic nations had long since settled down. The whole country, it might be asserted, had been born in a time of high temper and religious impatience; and this birthmark, once stamped upon

the intellectual features of the land, became its motto, crest, and coat-of-arms.

The moment had now come when this physical restlessness was, by some subtle alchemy, to transmute itself into an intellectual inquisitiveness, petulance, almost intolerance, which incarnated itself in committees of correspondence, political clubs, legislative bodies, and revolutionary assemblies. Little connected discourse had, so to speak, written itself down in America up to this time. The beginnings of a promising literature had, indeed, begun to sparkle casually in the writings of Franklin, Colonel William Byrd, Governor Hutchinson, and Jonathan Edwards. But, on the whole, the inner spiritual forces at work, in the fashion of undertow drifting hither and thither, had not yet sufficiently saturated the subtle intelligence of the West to impel them irresistibly to speak. In pamphlets alone,—in broadsides, sheets of flame, and leaflets buoyant as thistle-down floating here and there, intangible yet incandescent, in newspaper paragraphs or cutting couplets—did the anger, the discontent, or the buffoonery of the hour, find a fitful vent.

The year 1763 became the crucial year, the year of concentration, for all the flotsam and jetsam of new forces that had risen to the top, between the parallels of 31 and 45 degrees north. In this memorable year, the Treaty of Paris between England and France—between the third George and the fifteenth Louis—had thrown open the gates of almost the entire North American Continent, east of the

Mississippi, to the Anglo-Saxon race. Scarcely a rag of French influence hung on the mighty parallel of longitude that swept from the Arctic Circle to the Gulf of Mexico; scarcely a petal of the lovely *fleur-de-lis* was left to bloom and to star the soil between Quebec and New Orleans, the memorial plant of those cultured Bourbons who saw, in its spread and growth, suggestions of their symbolic sovereignty. Almost all was now English in the mighty world over which both had battled so long and so stoutly, decided, once for all, by the tragic conflict that had for ever ennobled and ensanguined the Heights of Abraham. In Montcalm, the *fleur-de-lis* exhaled its supreme sigh; in Wolfe, the rose, watered with the blood of heroes, burned with a fiercer crimson than ever, and struck root, deep and inviolable, in a soil from which it was never to be eradicated.

Joyous as might be the hymns of thanksgiving which saluted, with their acclaim, the lifting up of the everlasting gates that the King of England might enter in, the deed was fraught with direful consequences to the Crown. The single act of far-spreading sovereignty over the New World, constituting the essence of the treaty, had, in its heart of hearts, seeds of disaster and dissolution for the British Empire in America, never suspected by the diplomats who drew it up. It threw into the power of England realms of such vastness, responsibilities so searching, breadth and variety of interests so great, that the assembled wisdom of the five hundred and fifty-eight members of the House of Commons, and

this extravagance of cession, of conquest, of possession to stop?

Revenue acts for America must be planned; standing armies must be instituted for the transatlantic provinces, and these armies must be supported by the people whom they protected; the sacredness of American homes, hitherto free from domiciliary or any other kind of unwelcome visitor, must reveal its inmost secrets to a foreign soldiery billeted upon them; the Navigation Law must be enforced, and this, that, and the other obsolete statute revived, and every goose be squeezed to yield its golden egg.

The most stinging of all these propositions was perhaps the enforcement of the Navigation Act; the most maddening, the proposition to rivet a standing army on the colonies of free men accustomed to do their own soldiering. "I always," said John Adams, "consider the settlement of America with reverence and wonder, as the opening of a grand scene and design in Providence for the illumination of the ignorant, and the emancipation of the slavish part of mankind all over the earth."

Advancing into the wilderness with Bible, Book of Common Prayer, Catechism, and Charter, the four corner-stones of the quadrangle of commonwealth life, they had founded there numerous establishments which, in their way, were models of free and noble institutions, based upon a constitution running straight to Runnymede.

"Emancipation" had been the dominant chord of the whole movement from island to continent, the



secret of the plunge into the great deep, the mystery of embarkation for unknown lands in crazy caravels that scarce held bottom, till old-world nostrils sniffed the fragrances floating off-shore from the "Summer Isles." It was as if the ancient Mother held between her lips a magic pipe and blew from it, from time to time, painted bubbles that wafted themselves over sea in obedience to her command: "Go my children: make homes for yourselves"; and there settling, transformed themselves from bubbles into substantial commonwealths, with more or less of the radiancy of their origin hanging about them.

And now the proposition to catch all these wayward children in the drag-net of iron dependence again, and subject them, willy-nilly, to post-duties and internal taxes, to prohibitions on free trade and commerce with the outside world, even to restrictions on food, clothing, the printing press, and the things that make life joyous and tolerable—the mad purpose of the mother, to make the full-grown boy a babe again, raised first eyebrows of incredulity, then inflated nostrils with indignation, curled lips with contempt, and, finally, lifted the parricidal hand which was to sever, once and for ever, the umbilical cord that bound infant and parent vitally together.

"American independence, like the great rivers of the country, had many sources; but the head-spring which colored all the stream was the Navigation Act.

"Reverence for the colonial mercantile system was branded into Grenville's mind as deeply and inefaceably as ever the superstition of witchcraft into a

credulous and child-like nature. It was his 'idol'; and he adored it as 'sacred.' He held that 'Colonies are only settlements made in distant parts of the world for the improvement of trade; that they would be intolerable except on the conditions contained in the Act of Navigation; that those who, from the increase of contraband, had apprehensions that they may break off their connection with the mother country, saw not half the evil; that wherever the Acts of Navigation are disregarded, the connection is actually broken already.' Nor did this monopoly seem to him a wrong; he claimed for England the exclusive trade with its colonies as the exercise of an indisputable right which every state, in exclusion of all others, has to the services of its own subjects. His indefatigable zeal could never be satisfied.

"All officers of the customs in the colonies were ordered to their posts; their numbers were increased; they were provided with 'new and ample instructions enforcing in the strongest manner the strictest attention to their duty'; every officer that failed or faltered was instantly to be dismissed.

"Nor did Grenville fail to perceive that 'the restraint and suppression of practices which had long prevailed, would certainly encounter great difficulties in such distant parts of the king's dominions'; the whole force of the royal authority was therefore invoked in aid. The Governors were to make the suppression of the forbidden trade with foreign nations the constant and immediate object of their care. All officers, both civil, and military, and naval, in America and the West Indies, were to give their co-operation. 'We depend,' said a memorial from the treasury, 'upon

the sea-guard as the likeliest means for accomplishing these great purposes,' and that sea-guard was to be extended and strengthened as far as the naval establishments would allow. To complete the whole, and this was a favorite part of Grenville's scheme, a new and uniform system of Courts of Admiralty was to be established. On the very next day after this memorial was presented, the king himself in council gave his sanction to the whole system.

"Forthwith orders were issued directly to the Commander-in-chief in America that the troops under his command should give their assistance to the officers of the revenue for the effectual suppression of contraband trade.

"Nor was there delay in following up the new law to employ the navy to enforce the Navigation Acts. To this end Admiral Colville, the naval Commander-in-chief on the coasts of North America, from the river St. Lawrence to Cape Florida and the Bahama Islands, became the head of a new corps of revenue officers. Each captain of his squadron had custom-house commissions and a set of instructions from the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty for his guidance; and other instructions were given them by the Admiral to enter the harbors or lie off the coasts of America; to qualify themselves by taking the usual custom-house oaths to do the office of custom-house officers; to seize such persons as were suspected by them to be engaged in illicit trade.

"The promise of large emoluments in case of forfeitures stimulated their natural and irregular vivacity to enforce laws which had become obsolete, and they pounced upon American property as they would have

gone in war in quest of prize-money. Even at first their acts were equivocal, and they soon came to be as illegal as they were oppressive. There was no redress. An appeal to the Privy Council was costly and difficult, and besides, when as happened before the end of the year, an officer had to defend himself on an appeal, the suffering colonists were exhausted by the delay and expenses, while the treasury took care to indemnify their agent.”<sup>1</sup>

The enforcement of this act, which was designed to prevent the colonies from trading with any other country than England, at once changed the entire British Navy, stationed in American waters, into an armed police scouring the seas for smugglers, and seizing everything but iron, rice, lumber, and a few other articles as a kind of contraband.

The Navigation Acts were already more or less definitely in operation,—an effective styptic to the expansion of American trade except with Britain; and Yankee wits had for generations been wondrously quickened to circumvent them, converting the Gulf Stream, so to speak, into a battle-ground of smuggling and buccaneering where endless dramas of romance and adventure were played.

But these oppressive Acts, repugnant to every dictate of common sense and reason, even of common justice and decency, were now to be reinforced by another act of oppression, symbolically represented by a thin piece of blue paper blazoned with lions rampant of Great Britain. This image of the

<sup>1</sup> Bancroft, *History of the United States*, vol. v, pp. 159-162.



WASHINGTON AT MONMOUTH.  
From a design by F. O. C. Darley.



battling lions—ruefully symbolic as the issue turned out—was to be attached to every important legal paper—marriage contracts were not exempt—that concerned itself with the main issues of trade and commerce, of life and death in the colonies. It was an unhappy measure, devised by the ingenuity of statesmen at their wits' ends to meet the enormous consequences of colonial expansion imbedded in the splendid victory of Quebec. The mimic parliaments that had sprung up on the James, in Massachusetts Bay, at Charleston, Annapolis, Philadelphia, and Albany, were close and truthful imitations of the great legislative body that met at St. Stephen's, Westminster, and transacted business in which every free man delighted to take part. Free speech, free press, the right of free discussion, the right of appeal to the supreme tribunal, above all, the right to tax themselves, had been from time immemorial the governing principles of these legislative bodies, parent and children alike.

It had been the pride and the joy of the younger commonwealths to copy, not only the ancient forms, but the fresh and immortal spirit of English legislation, whose history and decisions were as familiar on the James as on the Thames.

At one fell stroke—in February, 1765—all this was changed by one of those acts of concentrated folly with which parliaments and congresses alike occasionally startle the world.

“From the days of King William there was a steady line of precedents of opinion that America should, like

Ireland, provide in whole, or at least in part, for the support of its military establishment. It was one of the first subjects of consideration on the organization of the Board of Trade. It again employed the attention of the servants of Queen Anne. It was still more seriously considered in the days of George the First; and when, in the reign of George the Second, the Duke of Cumberland was at the head of American military affairs, it was laid down as a principle, that a revenue sufficient for the purpose must be provided. The ministry of Bute resolved to provide such a revenue; for which Charles Townshend pledged the government. Parliament wished it. The king wished it. Almost all sorts and conditions of men repeatedly wished it.

“How America was to be compelled to contribute this revenue remained a question. For half a century or more, the king had sent executive orders or requisitions. But if requisitions were made, the colonial legislature claimed a right of freely deliberating upon them; and as the colonies were divided into nearly twenty different governments, it was held that they never would come to a common result. The need of some principle of union, of some central power was asserted. To give the military chief a dictatorial authority to require subsistence for the army, was suggested by the Board of Trade in 1696, in the days of King William and of Locke; was more deliberately planned in 1721; was apparently favored by Cumberland, and was one of the arbitrary proposals put aside by Pitt. To claim the revenue through a congress of the colonies, was at one time the plan of Halifax; but if the congress was of governors, their decision would be only consultatory, and have no more weight than royal instruc-



tions; and if the congress was a representative body, it would claim and exercise the right of free discussion. To demand a revenue by instruction from the king, and to enforce them by stringent coercive measures, was beyond the power of the prerogative, under the system established at the revolution. When New York had failed to make appropriations for the civil service, a bill was prepared to be laid before Parliament, giving the usual revenue; and this bill having received the approbation of the great whig lawyers, Northey and Raymond, was the precedent which overcame Grenville's scruples about taxing the colonies without first allowing them representatives. It was settled then that there must be a military establishment in America of twenty regiments; that after the first year its expenses must be defrayed by America; that the American colonies themselves, with their various charters, never would agree to vote such a revenue, and that Parliament must do it.

"It remained to consider what tax Parliament should impose. And here all agreed that the first object of taxation was foreign and intercolonial commerce. But that, under the navigation acts, would not produce enough. A poll tax was common in America; but, applied by Parliament, would fall unequally upon the colonies holding slaves. The difficulty in collecting quit-rents, proved that a land tax would meet with formidable obstacles. An excise was thought of, but kept in reserve. An issue of exchequer bills to be kept in circulation as the currency of the continent, was urged on the ministry, but conflicted with the policy of acts of parliament against the use of paper money in the colonies. Everybody who reasoned on the subject,

## CHAPTER XII

### THE COCKATRICE'S EGG

NINETEEN years before the eighteenth century expired, an accomplished old man, half dandy, half diplomat, sat at his exquisitely carved secretary in the famous house at Strawberry Hill, and penned the following retrospective lines to Sir Horace Mann:

“ From the hour that fatal egg, the Stamp Act, was laid, I disliked it and all the vipers hatched from it. I now hear many curse it, who fed the vermin with poisonous weeds. Yet the guilty and the innocent rue it equally hitherto! I would not answer for what is to come! Seven years of miscarriages may sour the sweetest tempers, and the most sweetened. Oh! where is the Dove with the olive-branch? Long ago I told you that you and I might not live to see an end of the American war. It is very near its end indeed now—its consequences are far from a conclusion. In some respects, they are commencing a new date, which will reach far beyond us. I desire not to pry into that book of futurity. Could I finish my course in peace—but one must take the chequered scenes of life as they come. What signifies whether the elements are serene or turbulent, when a private old man slips away? What has he and the world's concerns to do with one another? He may sigh for his country, and babble about it; but

he might as well sit quiet and read or tell old stories; the past is as important to him as the future.”<sup>1</sup>

It required just ten years—1765-1775—to hatch out the viper’s egg, and among the myriad of lively young consequences that crept out of it were a seven years’ war, a debt of £70,000,000 (according to Edmund Burke), the extinction of 100,000 precious lives, and the loss of what ultimately proved to be 3,000,000 square miles of territory.

Again Virginia was in that beautiful May time (so dear to Chaucer and to all true Englishmen), during which the Jamestown Fathers had first looked out and beheld the enchanted shores of Hampton Roads; the rich summer was advancing; the burgesses at old Williamsburg, having been in session some time, were about to adjourn, and soon the midsummer calm of halcyon silence from their wordy presence would fall like a benediction over capitol and palace, when a young man (it was his birthday) rose in place, and, taking out of his pocket a sheet of paper torn from an old law-book, read the following preamble and “resolves”:

“*Whereas*, the honorable house of commons in England have of late drawn into question how far the general assembly of this colony hath power to enact laws for laying of taxes and imposing duties, payable by the people of this, his majesty’s most ancient colony: for settling and ascertaining the same to all future times, the house of burgesses of this present general assembly have come to the following resolves:—

<sup>1</sup> *Letters of Horace Walpole*, vol. ii, p. 247.

“ 1. *Resolved*, That the first adventurers and settlers of this, his majesty's colony and dominion, brought with them and transmitted to their posterity, and all other his majesty's subjects, since inhabiting in this, his majesty's said colony, all the privileges, franchises, and immunities that have at any time been held, enjoyed, and possessed, by the people of Great Britain.

“ 2. *Resolved*, That by two royal charters, granted by king James the First, the colonists aforesaid are declared entitled to all the privileges, liberties, and immunities of denizens and natural born subjects, to all intents and purposes, as if they had been abiding and born within the realm of England.

“ 3. *Resolved*, That the taxation of the people by themselves or by persons chosen by themselves to represent them, who can only know what taxes the people are able to bear, and the easiest mode of raising them, and are equally affected by such taxes themselves, is the distinguishing characteristic of British freedom, and without which the ancient constitution cannot subsist.

“ 4. *Resolved*, That his majesty's liege people of this most ancient colony have uninterruptedly enjoyed the right of being thus governed by their own assembly in the article of their taxes, and internal police, and that the same hath never been forfeited, or any other way given up, but hath been constantly recognised by the kings and people of Great Britain.

“ 5. *Resolved*, therefore, That the general assembly of this colony have the only and sole exclusive right and power to lay taxes and impositions upon the inhabitants of this colony; and that every attempt to vest

such power in any person or persons whatsoever, other than the general assembly aforesaid, has a manifest tendency to destroy British as well as American freedom.

“6. *Resolved*, That his majesty's liege people, the inhabitants of this colony, are not bound to yield obedience to any law or ordinance whatever, designed to impose any taxation whatsoever upon them, other than the laws or ordinances of the general assembly aforesaid.

“7. *Resolved*, That any person who shall, by speaking or writing, assert or maintain that any person or persons, other than the general assembly of this colony, have any right or power to impose or lay any taxation on the people here, shall be deemed an enemy to his majesty's colony.”

“No reader will find it hard to accept Jefferson's statement that the debate on these resolutions was ‘most bloody.’ ‘They were opposed by Randolph, Bland, Pendleton, Nicholas, Wythe, and all the old members, whose influence in the house had till then been unbroken.’ There was every reason, whether of public policy or of private feeling, why the old party leaders in the House should now bestir themselves, and combine, and put forth all their powers in debate, to check, and if possible to rout and extinguish this self-conceited but most dangerous young man. ‘Many threats were uttered, and much abuse cast on him,’ said Patrick himself, long afterward. Logic, learning, eloquence, denunciation, derision, intimidation, were poured from all sides of the House upon the head of the presumptuous intruder; but alone, or almost alone, he confronted, and defeated all his assailants.

‘Torrents of sublime eloquence from Mr. Henry, backed by the solid reasoning of Johnston, prevailed.’

“It was sometime in the course of this tremendous fight, extending through the 29th and 30th of May, that the incident occurred which has long been familiar among the anecdotes of the Revolution, and which may be here recalled as a reminiscence, not only of his own consummate mastery of the situation, but of a most dramatic scene in an epoch-making debate. Reaching the climax of a passage of fearful invective, on the injustice and the impolicy of the Stamp Act, he said in tones of thrilling solemnity, ‘Cæsar had his Brutus; Charles the First, his Cromwell; and George the Third [‘Treason,’ shouted the speaker. ‘Treason,’ ‘treason,’ rose from all sides of the room. The orator paused in stately defiance till these rude exclamations were ended, and then, rearing himself with a look and bearing of still prouder and fiercer determination, he so closed the sentence as to baffle his accusers, without in the least flinching from his position,]—and George the Third may profit by their example. If this be treason, make the most of it.’”<sup>1</sup>

The young man’s voice was wonderfully sweet and flexible and grew in majesty and power as he read on, occasionally lifting an eye full of expression, then kindling with “a great flame of dauntless purpose” as he pursued his reading to the end.

Agitation betrayed itself on every countenance, as the young upstart from Louisa wound his way, at first with embarrassment, then with incomparable ease and power, through the weighty labyrinth

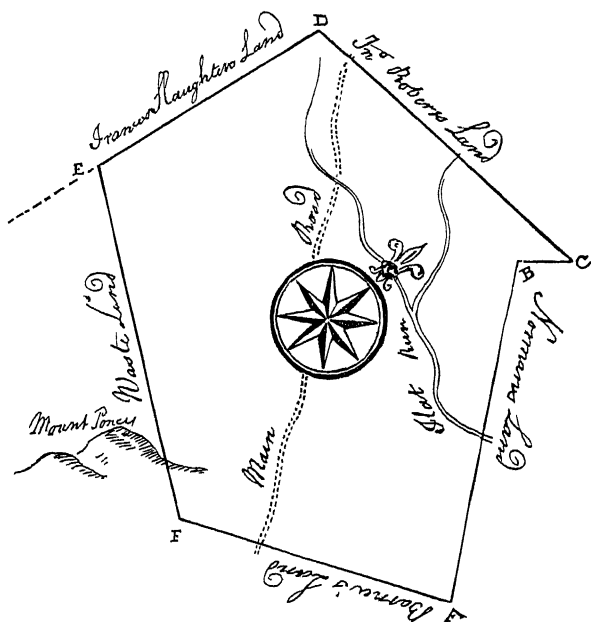
<sup>1</sup> Tyler, *Patrick Henry*, pp. 61-64.



# A BOOK of SURVEY'S

Began

<sup>d</sup>  
JULY 22: 1749



SURVEYOR'S MANUSCRIPT.

From Washington's "Book of Surveys."





of principles and statements slowly unfolding itself from the paper in his hand. Men looked at each other in amazement; annoyance, indignation, wrath flashed out of eyes long accustomed to rule in that historic assembly, answered by smiles of jubilant surprise, ecstasy, delight from others on whom "the day Star of the Revolution" now rose for the first time. There were grey-haired constitutional lawyers—Randolph, the Attorney-general, John Robinson, Speaker of the House, four of the incipient signers of the Declaration, the president of the first Continental Congress (to be), Wythe, the eminent Chancellor (afterwards poisoned by his nephew), Bland, Nicholas, Johnston, Fleming (to whom the "Resolves" were afterwards strangely attributed by Jefferson), possibly Colonel Washington himself; a throng of distinguished men skilled in debate, grown grey in the service of their country, not one of whom had as yet publicly spoken on the great question burning in the hearts of all.

Attention riveted itself on the member from Louisa: imperceptibly, memory began to work here and there, members began to recall a certain "tobacco question" which had agitated the whole colony three years before, in which this very man (aged twenty-seven) had taken central part.

This was the famous Parsons' Case, and the man was—Patrick Henry.

In this case, remarkable for the turn things had taken, the young advocate, hardly familiar with the forms of law itself, had been on the wrong side, on

the side of repudiation of a solemn obligation entered into by the vestries to pay their rectors in pounds of tobacco, not in pennies of depreciated paper; yet such was the power of his oratory, his thrilling denunciations of interference by the Crown in local legislation, his gift of persuasion and of quick and fluent imagination, that judge and jury alike were overwhelmed, the decision in favour of the parsons (virtually all the ghostly advisers in Virginia) was instantly reversed, twenty of the most learned clergy of the commonwealth present fled pell-mell from their seats, and a verdict of one penny damages against the Rev. James Maury *et al.* was brought in without delay.

It was in this speech that the audacious orator had first used the word "tyrant" as applicable to a ruler who would trample under foot ancient charters and constitutional guarantees, and that the alliterative response "treason" darted from the lips of bystanders still loyal to the House of Hanover.

As this tide of memories and associations flowed into the consciousness of the burgesses, as they sat around, from Mr. Speaker to the humblest representative of forest and mountain, the situation cleared: men stared, at first aghast, then with gesture of antagonism or assent; at last things came to a crisis: men voted.

"Ayes 20; noes 19," rang out in clear tones from the clerk's desk. The celebrated "Virginia Resolutions" were a part of history.

“Upon this final discomfiture of the old leaders, one of their number, Peyton Randolph, swept angrily out of the House, and brushing past young Thomas Jefferson, who was standing in the door of the lobby, he swore, with a great oath, that he ‘would have given five hundred guineas for a single vote.’”<sup>1</sup>

When he was a very old man, almost at the close of his career, Henry gave the following authentic account of this celebrated transaction:

“The within resolutions passed the house of burgesses in May, 1765. They formed the first opposition to the Stamp Act, and the scheme of taxing America by the British parliament. All the colonies, either through fear, or want of opportunity to form an opposition, or from influence of some kind or other, had remained silent. I had been for the first time elected a burgess a few days before; was young, inexperienced, unacquainted with the forms of the house, and the members that composed it. Finding the men of weight averse to opposition, and the commencement of the tax at hand, and that no person was likely to step forth, I determined to venture; and alone, unadvised, and unassisted, on a blank leaf of an old law book, wrote the within. Upon offering them to the house, violent debates ensued. Many threats were uttered, and much abuse cast on me by the party for submission. After a long and warm contest, the resolutions passed by a very small majority, perhaps of one or two only. The alarm spread throughout America with astonishing quickness, and the ministerial party were overwhelmed. The great point of resistance to British taxation was

<sup>1</sup> Tyler, *Patrick Henry*, p. 66.

universally established in the colonies. This brought on the war, which finally separated the two countries, and gave independence to ours.

“Whether this will prove a blessing or a curse, will depend upon the use our people make of the blessings which a gracious God hath bestowed on us. If they are wise, they will be great and happy. If they are of a contrary character, they will be miserable. Righteousness alone can exalt them as a nation.

“Reader! whoever thou art, remember this; and in thy sphere practise virtue thyself, and encourage it in others.

“P. HENRY.”<sup>1</sup>

“As the historic importance of the Virginia resolutions became more and more apparent, a disposition was manifested to deny to Patrick Henry the honour of having written them. As early as 1790, Madison, between whom and Henry there was nearly always a sharp hostility, significantly asked Edmund Pendleton to tell him ‘where the resolutions proposed by Mr. Henry really originated.’”<sup>2</sup>

Edmund Randolph is said to have asserted that they were written by William Fleming; a statement of which Jefferson remarked, “It is to me incomprehensible.” But to Jefferson’s own testimony on the same subject, I would apply the same remark. In his Memorandum, he says without hesitation that the resolutions “were drawn up by George Johnston, a lawyer of the Northern Neck, a very able,

<sup>1</sup> Tyler, *Patrick Henry*, p. 75.

<sup>2</sup> *Letters and Other Writings of Madison*, vol. i, p. 515.

logical, and correct speaker.”<sup>1</sup> But in another paper, written at about the same time, Jefferson said: “I can readily enough believe these resolutions were written by Mr. Henry himself. They bear the stamp of his mind, strong without precision. That they were written by Johnston, who seconded them, was only the rumor of the day, and very possibly unfounded.” In the face of all this tissue of rumour, guesswork, and self-contradiction, the deliberate statement of Patrick Henry himself, that he wrote the seven resolutions referred to by him, and that he wrote them “alone, unadvised, and unassisted,” must close the discussion.<sup>2</sup>

This places in an undoubted light not only the authorship of the “Resolves” but certain accompanying details picturesquely clinging to these passages.

Of extreme importance for our immediate purpose is a small group of Washington letters, running from 1767 to the beginning of the Revolution, showing the growth of opinion on this taxation question in the mind of the most illustrious figure and actor in it. Incidentally, too, these letters show vividly the kind of correspondence then passing from week to week among Virginia gentlemen of the ruling class, alive to the needs of the day, the situation of matters in England, the trend of public opinion on subjects vitally affecting the

<sup>1</sup> *Hist. Mag.* for 1867, p. 91.

<sup>2</sup> Tyler, *Patrick Henry*, p. 75, note.

colonies. Washington was never passionate nor partisan; the ardour of his mind usually expressed itself in acts, not in words; but one cannot read this striking group of opinions and reflections on the drift of things in America, in the decade under discussion, without feeling the increasing purpose, the deep and concentrated feeling, the surge and swell of an anger which at last, repressed with admirable self-control for ten years, burst all bounds and converted this man and thousands of his countrymen from rank royalists to rank republicans, from Englishmen bred in the bone, to rebels, revolutionists, Americans.

Autobiographically remodelled, these letters might well be entitled: "How I Became a Rebel."

"TO GEORGE MASON

"Mount Vernon, 5 April, 1769.

"DEAR SIR,

"Herewith you will receive a letter and sundry papers, which were forwarded to me a day or two ago by Dr. Ross of Bladensburg. I transmit them with the greater pleasure, as my own desire of knowing your sentiments upon a matter of this importance exactly coincides with the Doctor's inclinations.

"At a time, when our lordly masters in Great Britain will be satisfied with nothing less than the deprivation of American freedom, it seems highly necessary that something should be done to avert the stroke, and maintain the liberty, which we have derived from our ancestors. But the manner of doing

it, to answer the purpose effectually, is the point in question.

“That no man should scruple, or hesitate a moment, to use a—ms in defence of so valuable a blessing, on which all the good and evil of life depends, is clearly my opinion. Yet a—ms I would beg leave to add, should be the last resource, the *dernier resort*. Addresses to the throne, and remonstrances to Parliament, we have already, it is said, proved the inefficacy of. How far, then, their attention to our rights and privileges is to be awakened or alarmed, by starving their trade and manufactures, remains to be tried.

“The northern colonies, it appears, are endeavoring to adopt this scheme. In my opinion it is a good one, and must be attended with salutary effects, provided it can be carried pretty generally into execution. But to what extent it is practicable to do so, I will not take upon me to determine. That there will be difficulties attending the execution of it every where, from clashing interests, and selfish, designing men, (ever attentive to their own gain, and watchful of every turn, that can assist their lucrative views, in preference to every other consideration) cannot be denied; but in the tobacco colonies, where the trade is so diffused, and in a manner wholly conducted by factors for their principals at home, these difficulties are certainly enhanced, but I think not insurmountably increased, if the gentlemen in their several counties will be at some pains to explain matters to the people, and stimulate them to a cordial agreement to purchase none but certain enumerated articles out of any of the stores after such a period, nor import nor purchase any themselves. This, if it did not effectually withdraw the factors from their

importations, would at least make them extremely cautious in doing it, as the prohibited goods could be vended to none but the non-associators, or those who would pay no regard to their association; both of whom ought to be stigmatized, and made the objects of public reproach.

“The more I consider a scheme of this sort, the more ardently I wish success to it, because I think there are private as well as public advantages to result from it,—the former certain, however precarious the other may prove. For in respect to the latter, I have always thought, that by virtue of the same power, (for here alone the authority derives) which assumes the right of taxation, they may attempt at least to restrain our manufactories, especially those of a public nature, the same equity and justice prevailing in the one case as the other, it being no greater hardship to forbid my manufacturing, than it is to order me to buy goods of them loaded with duties, for the express purpose of raising a revenue. But as a measure of this sort would be an additional exertion of arbitrary power, we cannot be worsted, I think, by putting it to the test.

“On the other hand, that the colonies are considerably indebted to Great Britain, is a truth universally acknowledged. That many families are reduced almost, if not quite, to penury and want from the low ebb of their fortunes, and estates daily selling for the discharge of debts, the public papers furnish but too many melancholy proofs of, and that a scheme of this sort will contribute more effectually than any other I can devise to emerge the country from the distress it at present labors under, I do most firmly believe, if it can be generally adopted. And I can see but one set





WASHINGTON ENTERING NEW YORK CITY.



of people (the merchants excepted,) who will not, or ought not, to wish well to the scheme, and that is those who live genteelly and hospitably on clear estates. Such as these, were they not to consider the valuable object in view, and the good of others, might think it hard to be curtailed in their living and enjoyments. For as to the penurious man, he saves his money, and saves his credit, having the best plea for doing that, which before, perhaps, he had the most violent struggles to refrain from doing. The extravagant and expensive man has the same good plea to retrench his expenses. He is thereby furnished with a pretext to live within bounds, and embraces it. Prudence dictated economy to him before, but his resolution was too weak to put it in practice; For how can I, *says he*, who have lived in such and such a manner, change my method? I am ashamed to do it, and, besides, such an alteration in the system of my living will create suspicions of the decay in my fortune, and such a thought the world must not harbour. I will e'en continue my course, till at last the course discontinues the estate, a sale of it being the consequence of his perseverance in error. This I am satisfied is the way, that many, who have set out in the wrong track, have reasoned, till ruin stares them in the face. And in respect to the poor and needy man, he is only left in the same situation that he was found,—better, I might say, because, as he judges from comparison, his condition is amended in proportion as it approaches nearer to those above him.

“Upon the whole, therefore, I think the scheme a good one, and that it ought to be tried here, with such alterations as the exigency of our circumstances renders absolutely necessary. But how, and in what

manner to begin the work, is a matter worthy of consideration, and whether it can be attempted with propriety or efficacy (further than a communication of sentiments to one another,) before May, when the Court and Assembly will meet in Williamsburg, and a uniform plan can be concerted, and sent into the different counties to operate at the same time and in the same manner everywhere, is a thing I am somewhat in doubt upon, and should be glad to know your opinion of.”<sup>1</sup>

The following is an extract from Mr. Mason’s reply to this letter, dated the same day :

“I entirely agree with you, that no regular plan of the sort proposed can be entered into here, before the meeting of the General Court at least, if not of the Assembly. In the mean time it may be necessary to publish something preparatory to it in our gazettes, to warn the people of the impending danger, and induce them the more readily and cheerfully to concur in the proper measures to avert it; and something of this sort I had begun, but am unluckily stopped by a disorder, which affects my head and eyes. As soon as I am able, I shall resume it, and then write you more fully, or endeavor to see you. In the mean time pray commit to writing such hints as may occur.

“Our all is at stake, and the little conveniences and comforts of life, when set in competition with our liberty, ought to be rejected, not with reluctance, but with pleasure. Yet it is plain, that in the tobacco colonies we cannot at present confine our importations within such narrow bounds, as the northern colonies.

<sup>1</sup> Ford, *Writings of George Washington*, vol. ii, p. 263.

A plan of this kind, to be practicable, must be adapted to our circumstances; for if not steadily executed, it had better have remained unattempted. We may retrench all manner of superfluities, finery of all descriptions, and confine ourselves to linens, woollens, &c. not exceeding a certain price. It is amazing how much this practice, if adopted in all the colonies, would lessen the American imports, and distress the various traders and manufacturers in Great Britain.

“ This would awaken their attention. They would see, they would feel, the oppressions we groan under, and exert themselves to procure us redress. This once obtained, we should no longer discontinue our importations, confining ourselves still not to import any article, that should hereafter be taxed by act of Parliament for raising a revenue in America; for, however singular I may be in my opinion, I am thoroughly convinced, that, justice and harmony happily restored, it is not the interest of these colonies to refuse British manufactures. Our supplying our mother country with gross materials, and taking her manufactures in return, is the true chain of connexion between us. These are the bands, which, if not broken by oppression, must long hold us together, by maintaining a constant reciprocation of interest. Proper caution should, therefore, be used in drawing up the proposed plan of association. It may not be amiss to let the ministry understand, that, until we obtain a redress of grievances, we will withhold from them our commodities, and particularly refrain from making tobacco, by which the revenue would lose fifty times more than all their oppressions could raise here.

“ Had the hint, which I have given with regard to

taxation of goods imported into America, been thought of by our merchants before the repeal of the Stamp Act, the late American revenue acts would probably never have been attempted.”<sup>1</sup>

“TO BRYAN FAIRFAX

“Mount Vernon, 4 July, 1774.

“...As to your political sentiments, I would heartily join you in them, so far as relates to a humble and dutiful petition to the throne, provided there was the most distant hope of success. But have we not tried this already? Have we not addressed the Lords, and remonstrated to the Commons? And to what end? Did they deign to look at our petitions? Does it not appear, as clear as the sun in its meridian brightness, that there is a regular, systematic plan formed to fix the right and practice of taxation upon us? Does not the uniform conduct of Parliament for some years past confirm this? Do not all the debates, especially those just brought to us, in the House of Commons on the side of government, expressly declare that America must be taxed in aid of the British funds, and that she has no longer resources within herself? Is there any thing to be expected from petitioning after this? Is not the attack upon the liberty and property of the people of Boston, before restitution of the loss to the India Company was demanded, a plain and self-evident proof of what they are aiming at? Do not the subsequent bills (now I dare say acts), for depriving the Massachusetts Bay of its charter, and for transporting

<sup>1</sup> Ford, *Writings of George Washington*, vol. ii, p. 267, note. For letters to Capel Hanbury and Robert Cary, see p. 199.

offenders into other colonies or to Great Britain for trial, where it is impossible from the nature of the thing that justice can be obtained, convince us that the administration is determined to stick at nothing to carry its point? Ought we not, then, to put our virtue and fortitude to the severest test?

“With you I think it a folly to attempt more than we can execute, as that will not only bring disgrace upon us, but weaken our cause; yet I think we may do more than is generally believed, in respect to the non-importation scheme. As to the withholding of our remittances, that is another point, in which I own I have my doubts on several accounts, but principally on that of justice; for I think, whilst we are accusing others of injustice, we should be just ourselves; and how this can be, whilst we owe a considerable debt, and refuse payment of it to Great Britain, is to me inconceivable. Nothing but the last extremity, I think, can justify it. Whether this is now come, is the question.”<sup>1</sup>

“The inhabitants of Fairfax County had assembled, and appointed a committee for drawing up resolutions expressive of their sentiments on the great topics, which agitated the country. Washington was chairman of this committee, and moderator of the meetings held by the people. An able report was prepared by the committee, containing a series of resolutions, which were presented at a general meeting of the inhabitants at the court-house in Fairfax County on the 18th of July.

“Mr. Bryan Fairfax, who had been present on

<sup>1</sup> Ford, *Writings of George Washington*, vol. ii, p. 417.

former occasions, not approving all the resolutions, absented himself from this meeting, and wrote a long letter to the chairman, stating his views and objections, with the request that it should be publicly read.”<sup>2</sup>

“TO BRYAN FAIRFAX

“Mount Vernon, 20 July, 1774.

“DEAR SIR,

“Your letter of the 17th was not presented to me till after the resolutions, (which were adjudged advisable for this county to come to), had been revised, altered, and corrected in the committee; nor till we had gone into a general meeting in the court-house, and my attention necessarily called every moment to the business that was before it. I did, however, upon receipt of it (in that hurry and bustle,) hastily run it over, and handed it round to the gentlemen on the bench of which there were many; but, as no person present seemed in the least disposed to adopt your sentiments, as there appeared a perfect satisfaction and acquiescence in the measures proposed (except from a Mr. Williamson, who was for adopting your advice literally, without obtaining a second voice on his side), and as the gentlemen, to whom the letter was shown, advised me not to have it read, as it was not like to make a convert, and repugnant, (some of them thought,) to the very principle we were contending for, I forbore to offer it otherwise than in the manner above mentioned; which I shall be sorry for, if it gives you any dissatisfaction in not having your sentiments read to the county at large, instead of communicating

<sup>2</sup> Ford, *Writings of George Washington*, vol. ii, p. 420, note.



them to the first people in it, by offering them the letter in the manner I did.

“That I differ very widely from you, in respect to the mode of obtaining a definite repeal of the acts so much and so justly complained of, I shall not hesitate to acknowledge; and that this difference in opinion may probably proceed from the different constructions we put upon the conduct and intention of the ministry may also be true; but, as I see nothing, on the one hand, to induce a belief that the Parliament would embrace a favorable opportunity of repealing acts, which they go on with great rapidity to pass, and in order to enforce their tyrannical system; and, on the other, I observe, or think I observe, that government is pursuing a regular plan at the expense of law and justice to overthrow our constitutional rights and liberties, how can I expect any redress from a measure, which has been ineffectually tried already? For, Sir, what is it we are contending against? Is it against paying the duty of three pence per pound on tea because burthensome? No, it is the right only, we have all along disputed, and to this end we have already petitioned his Majesty in as humble and dutiful manner as subjects could do. Nay, more, we applied to the House of Lords and House of Commons in their different legislative capacities, setting forth, that, as Englishmen, we could not be deprived of this essential and valuable part of a constitution. If, then, as the fact really is, it is against the right of taxation that we now do, and, (as I before said,) all along have contended, why should they suppose an exertion of this power would be less obnoxious now than formerly? And what reasons have we to believe, that they would

make a second attempt, while the same sentiments filled the breast of every American, if they did not intend to enforce it if possible?

“The conduct of the Boston people could not justify the rigor of their measures, unless there had been a requisition of payment and refusal of it; nor did that measure require an act to deprive the government of Massachusetts Bay of their charter, or to exempt offenders from trial in the place where offences were committed, as there was not, nor could not be, a single instance produced to manifest the necessity of it. Are not all these things self evident proofs of a fixed and uniform plan to tax us? If we want further proofs, do not all the debates in the House of Commons serve to confirm this? And has not General Gage’s conduct since his arrival, (in stopping the address of his Council, and publishing a proclamation more becoming a Turkish bashaw, than an English governor, declaring it treason to associate in any manner by which the commerce of Great Britain is to be affected,) exhibited an unexampled testimony of the most despotic system of tyranny, that ever was practised in a free government? In short, what further proofs are wanted to satisfy one of the designs of the ministry, than their own acts, which are uniform and plainly tending to the same point, nay, if I mistake not, avowedly to fix the right of taxation? What hope then from petitioning, when they tell us, that now or never is the time to fix the matter? Shall we, after this, whine and cry for relief, when we have already tried it in vain? Or shall we supinely sit and see one province after another fall a prey to despotism? If I was in any doubt, as to the right which the Parliament of Great Britain had to

tax us without our consent, I should most heartily coincide with you in opinion, that to petition, and petition only, is the proper method to apply for relief; because we should then be asking a favor, and not claiming a right, which, by the law of nature and our constitution, we are, in my opinion, indubitably entitled to. I should even think it criminal to go further than this, under such an idea; but none such I have. I think the Parliament of Great Britain hath no more right to put their hands into my pocket, without my consent, than I have to put my hands into yours for money; and this being already urged to them in a firm, but decent manner, by all the colonies, what reason is there to expect any thing from their justice?

“As to the resolution for addressing the throne, I own to you, Sir, I think the whole might as well have been expunged. I expect nothing from the measure, nor should my voice have accompanied it, if the non-importation scheme was intended to be retarded by it; for I am convinced, as much as I am of my existence, that there is no relief but in their distress; and I think, at least I hope, that there is public virtue enough left among us to deny ourselves every thing but the bare necessities of life to accomplish this end. This we have a right to do, and no power upon earth can compel us to do otherwise, till they have first reduced us to the most abject state of slavery that ever was designed for mankind. The stopping our exports would, no doubt, be a shorter cut than the other to effect this purpose; but if we owe money to Great Britain, nothing but the last necessity can justify the non-payment of it; and, therefore, I have great doubts upon this head,

and wish to see the other method first tried, which is legal and will facilitate these payments.

"I cannot conclude without expressing some concern, that I should differ so widely in sentiment from you, in a matter of such great moment and general import; and should much distrust my own judgment upon the occasion, if my nature did not recoil at the thought of submitting to measures, which I think subversive of every thing that I ought to hold dear and valuable, and did I not find, at the same time, that the voice of mankind is with me."<sup>1</sup>

"TO BRYAN FAIRFAX

"Mount Vernon, 24 August, 1774.

"DEAR SIR,

"Your letter of the 5th instant came to this place, forwarded by Mr. Ramsay, a few days after my return from Williamsburg, and I delayed acknowledging it sooner, in the hopes that I should find time, before I began my other journey to Philadelphia, to answer it fully, if not satisfactorily; but, as much of my time has been engrossed since I came home by company, by your brother's sale and the business consequent thereupon, in writing letters to England and now in attending to my own domestic affairs previous to my departure as above, I find it impossible to bestow so much time and attention to the subject matter of your letter as I could wish to do, and therefore, must rely upon your good nature and candor in excuse for not replying attempting it.

"In truth, persuaded as I am, that you have read

<sup>1</sup> Ford, *Writings of George Washington*, vol. ii, p. 420.

all the political pieces, which compose a large share of the *Gazette* at this time, I should think it, but for your request, a piece of inexcusable arrogance in me, to make the least essay towards a change in your political opinions; for I am sure I have no new lights to throw upon the subject, or any other arguments to offer in support of my own doctrine, than what you have seen; and could only in general add, that an innate spirit of freedom first told me, that the measures, which administration hath for some time been, and now are most violently pursuing, are repugnant to every principle of natural justice; whilst much abler heads than my own hath fully convinced me, that it is not only repugnant to natural right, but subversive of the laws and constitution of Great Britain itself, in the establishment of which some of the best blood in the Kingdom hath been spilt. Satisfied, then, that the acts of a British Parliament are no longer governed by the principles of justice, that it is trampling upon the valuable rights of Americans, confirmed to them by charter and the constitution they themselves boast of, and convinced beyond the smallest doubt that these measures are the result of deliberation, and attempted to be carried into execution by the hand of power, is it a time to trifle, or risk our cause upon petitions, which with difficulty obtain access, and afterwards are thrown by with the utmost contempt? Or should we, because heretofore unsuspecting of design, and then unwilling to enter into disputes with the mother country, go on to bear more, and forbear to enumerate our just causes of complaint? For my own part, I shall not undertake to say where the line between Great Britain and the colonies should be drawn; but I am clearly of opinion, that one

ought to be drawn, and our rights clearly ascertained. I could wish, I own, that the dispute had been left to posterity to determine, but the crisis is arrived when we must assert our rights, or submit to every imposition, that can be heaped upon us, till custom and use shall make us as tame and abject slaves, as the blacks we rule over with such arbitrary sway.

“ I intended to have wrote no more than an apology for not writing ; but I find I am insensibly running into a length I did not expect, and therefore shall conclude with remarking, that if you disavow the right of Parliament to tax us, (unrepresented as we are,) we only differ in respect to the mode of opposition, and this difference principally arises from your belief, that they—the Parliament, I mean,—want a decent opportunity to repeal the acts ; whilst I am as fully convinced, as I am of my own existence, that there has been a regular, systematic plan formed to enforce them, and that nothing but unanimity in the colonies (a stroke they did not expect) and firmness, can prevent it. It seems from the best advices from Boston, that General Gage is exceedingly disconcerted at the quiet and steady conduct of the people of the Massachusetts Bay, and at the measures pursuing by the other governments ; as I dare say he expected to have forced those oppressed people into compliances, or irritated them to acts of violence before this, for a more colorable pretense of ruling that and the other colonies with a high hand. But I am done.” <sup>1</sup>

In these letters Washington simply shows a high degree of common-sense intelligence—no genius

<sup>1</sup> Ford, *Writings of George Washington*, vol. ii, p. 429.

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for oratory, rhetoric, or expression, except in the lucid presentation of plain facts such as they appeared to the average country gentleman of the day. "When the people meddle with reasoning," said Voltaire almost at this very time, "all is lost."

Washington was one of this thinking mob. The calm, contemplative life at Mount Vernon left him leisure to think.

## CHAPTER XIII

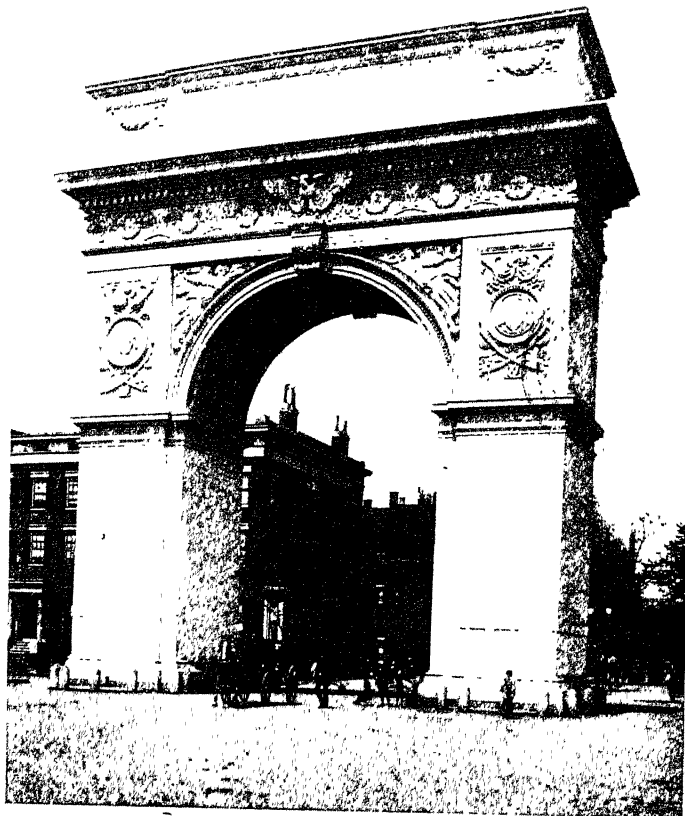
### “THE DEADLY TEA-CHEST”

REVOLUTIONS frequently concentrate themselves in the nutshell of a popular cry: even ecclesiastical revolutions have thus stamped themselves with the ineffaceable stigma of revolt. At the Reformation, “the just shall live by faith” became the watchword of the reformers. At the period of the French Revolution, “*liberté, égalité, fraternité*” rang on all the air of the time. In the Revolution of 1688, chartered rights and institutions were the dominant thought of statesmen and populace alike, and the thought coined itself into pithy and golden phrases pregnant with historic meaning; occasionally, as in Egmont’s time, some simple object, like the beggar’s scrip, was snatched up and became the visible tabernacle of the indwelling revolutionary spirit.

In America, between 1765 and 1775, “Liberty, Property, No Stamps!” rang from New Hampshire to Georgia; and even when the odious Act—all except the tax on tea—was repealed, the fury of the popular imagination fixed on *tea* as the symbol of an infernal sovereignty, which popular patience would no longer brook.

Tea—tea, the tiny monosyllable of three letters,





WASHINGTON ARCH, NEW YORK CITY.



embodied in its small self, to the mind of that day, the whole creed of tyranny. From the first whiff of this delightful beverage, wafted to us in old Pepys's *Diary* of 28th September, 1660, “I did send for a cup of tee (a China drink) of which I had never drank before.” Two years later he writes: “Home, and there find my wife making of tea, a drink which Mr. Pelling the Pothicary tells her is good for her cold and defluxions”: from this time, the tea-kettles of England multiplied its consumption to more than five millions of pounds; in every household of the United Kingdom, *Camellia theifera*, whether of the *Thea sinensis* variety of Linnæus, or of other varieties and graftings, had become indispensable to a well-ordered household. Millions of tea-kettles steamed merrily over millions of hearths, waiting for the cunningly rolled leaves or fragrant powders to be steeped, for the delectation of lonely fireside or literary gathering. Historic tea-bibbers like Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Thrale have been handed down to posterity, on an equal footing with tobaccophiles like Lord Tennyson or coffee-drinkers like Napoleon. Tea-houses had sprung up like magic all over the kingdom. Of the 5,000,000 pounds imported, at least 1,500,000 sent up clouds of fragrant steam from American caddies. Washington was passionately fond of tea, and rivalled the great lexicographer in his devotion to this fluid, enthusiastically joining his contemporaries in the institution of the afternoon tea.

Tea, in short, represented a harmless luxury in-

dulged in by thousands who, surmounting the stiff prices, contrived to get it for the alleviation of the long evenings, or for a mild and agreeable medicine described by Pepys.

Yet tea—tea, the most harmless and delectable of drinks, bubbling peacefully in its kettle, or steeping demurely in the exquisite pots prepared especially for it—now became the sign and symbol of Revolution, red, ruthless, infuriate!

“So for the next three years tea was the symbol with which the hostile spirits conjured. It stood for everything that true freemen loathe. In the deadly tea-chest lurked the complete surrender of self-government, the payment of governors and judges by the crown, the arbitrary suppression of legislatures, the denial of the principle that freemen can be taxed only by their own representatives. So long as they were threatened with tea, the colonists would not break the non-intercourse agreement. Once the merchants of New York undertook to order from England various other articles than tea, and the news was greeted all over the country with such fury, that nothing more of the sort was attempted openly. As for tea itself shipped from England, one would as soon have thought of trying to introduce the Black Death.”<sup>1</sup>

The tea drunk by 2,500,000 people did not weigh an atom in this balance in comparison with the principle at stake. At first it had been stamps, whose heraldic device of the royal arms—two lions rampant upholding a much-quartered shield—

<sup>1</sup> Fiske, *Essays Historical and Literary*, vol. ii, p. 186.

seemed, to the humorous imagination of the day, to dance on the liberties of the colonies; now it was tea, which after the impost on glass, painter's colours, red and white lead, still remained proud and defiant, a revolutionary plant on the ministry's tax-list, as the symbol of British power and sovereignty never to be yielded or removed.

And so the childish contention—infinately childish it would seem to us now, had not great fundamental principles of self-taxation underlaid it—went on, until seventeen millions of pounds of this insidious vegetable had heaped themselves up in the East India Company's warehouses.

The American nation was young then, and apologists might attribute this abnormal excitement to over-strained nerves and juvenility in general; the very passion for tea might have turned its brain into a passion against tea, as the fetish of an over-excited fancy.

But the ever-increasing note of indignation, traceable in the letters of Washington in our last chapter, now swelled to a great diapason of discontent. It was like the breath of one of those cyclonic storms far in the West: beginning as a whisper, almost as a lullaby of feverish unrest at its birth in the mountains, it rolls eastward, swift and irresistible, gathering volume and vindictiveness as it sweeps on, until the hurricane-point is reached.

Washington's admirable presentation of the calm, common-sense side of the troubles, as viewed by the typical Virginia gentleman of 1765, was no less

effective, though much more dignified, than the wild turmoil of speech that prevailed in some of the other colonies.

The north-eastern colonies were indeed strenuous examples of precocious political development, a development which unlike the radiant adolescence of the South, had been stimulated less by suns than snows, less by soft open-air exercises and luxurious plantation life, than by granite hills, grim icicles and cutting blasts: Boreas rather than Zephyr presided over the New England household. And it was precisely these ill-favoured surroundings, which might be called lovely and majestic only when they melted into the emerald curves of the Green Mountains, or the opaline crests of Mount Washington, or gathered into exquisite lakes that tremble like quicksilver in the "pockets" of the Maine forests—it was these very ill-favoured surroundings that evoked one of the most remarkable little political societies which the world has seen, since Athenian democracy met in the *agora* and discussed the policy of Xerxes or of Sparta.

"Massachusetts," like "Virginia," was originally one of those vague geographic terms, whose inclusiveness stretched over the hemisphere like the streamers of the zodiacal light, touching nothing but embracing everything. The generous autocrats of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries gave away lands by parallels of latitude, continents, worlds, without even questioning the right to give. Massachusetts, at the time of which we are speaking, em-

braced the vast and picturesque territory of Maine, whose French name recalled its Gallic antecedents. On its granite foundations, hidden out of sight by deep cushions of luxuriant grass and interminable stretches of spice-breathing *coniferæ*, had planted themselves two hundred lively little towns, whose triple glories were the grammar-school, the town-meeting, or ancient folk-moot of the Germanic race, and the Puritan meeting-house. From the beginning, all New England believed in this trinity, whatever the later cavilling of its Unitarian ecclesiastics might be. Education, free discussion, village politics grew to be the “fad,” the infatuation of the two hundred thousand white people who had made this wilderness blossom like a rose, and planted a fruit-tree where a prickly thistle had grown before. The country lanes were full of decent little villages whose tapering church-spires were, at once, monuments of the new life, and reminiscences of the far-away English homes from which the villagers had come. Everything buzzed and hummed with hearty activities; the rudely shaped dwellings were often the handiwork of the indwellers, built to last, and furnished with every reasonable convenience. In some cases, the nails and wrought-iron work and simple furnishings were the direct offspring of the toil of men who attached their vigorous hieroglyphic to the Declaration, or founded a line punctuated to the present time with distinguished names. In time, the *Mayflower* budded into a wonderful world of leaf, and blossom and fruit—a

floating garden which had brought the Old World to the New—and infinitely more, for here even the new-born children of the Newest Testament bequeathed by the Old to the New, along with a world of new-born possibilities, hopes, ambitions—new eyes to look at things, new brains to think of them, new mouths to speak and, after a while—to sing of them in strains sung the world over. At first all seemed “granulation,” disintegration, Congregationalism of an independent touch-me-not kind, most unpromising for future union and harmony, discordant notes scattered on the hills without one thought of those high federal harmonies one day to flow from these.

It had required just one hundred and fifty years from the first step on Plymouth Rock to the beginning of the Revolution, when Boston, now a town of eighteen thousand folk enthroned on its peninsula, seemed to push forth its tongue of flame into the blue bay, and speak wrath and defiance to the venerable mother on the other side of the water. For in the century and a half just elapsed the commonwealth of Massachusetts Bay had become grizzled in the Indian wars, wonderfully wise in its own conceit, a trifle supercilious in its intellectual arrogance, petulant in the extreme to outside meddling, jealous of its own privileges and of the prerogatives of others, afflicted with beginnings of that intellectual insomnia which has been its characteristic from that day to this, perpetually peeping over its neighbour's fences to see what people over there



are doing, yet scouring and scouring its own pots and kettles to the ultimate degree of brightness. A curious, inquiring prying and peeping into corners of grandmother's cupboard marked this infant commonwealth: not to meddle with religion was a sin, not to meddle with politics was a shame, not to go to town-meeting, not to go to something when you were duly elected, was a crime. The highest sense of public duty grew in these people as weeds grew in others: civic pride, municipal virtue, vast concern in the doings of legislatures and assemblies, endless patience in listening to endless debate, provided the subject was improvement, reform, education, libraries, schools, beneficence; the ears of the New Englanders would gloat for ever over these magnetic topics, and listen far into the night to the propositions of Selectman This or Assemblyman That, designed to introduce the Golden Age at once, without a moment's delay, on the banks of the Charles, the Merrimac, or the Penobscot.

John Harvard, himself, had been born not far from Shakspeare's town, and had founded an institution just outside of Boston, which had given a certain Shaksperian turn and versatility to the culture of New England, as the sister institution at Williamsburg had imprinted a kind of Miltonic eloquence and intonation on the early culture of Virginia. Every year, the whitest fleece, the most unblemished lambs of Harvard went forth into the ecclesiastical fold, and shepherded the souls of New England along the paths at first of rigid Puritanism,

then of orthodoxy less cold, clear, passionless, finally, into the by-paths of a heterodoxy which insisted only on the blameless life and the lofty ideal. Harvard, indeed, was the one institution to which New England might point with absolute pride, as absolutely typical both of its life and of its ideal. It was the noble child of a young man just one-and-thirty, whose gift of three hundred volumes has grown to more than as many hundred thousands, and whose few hundred pounds have multiplied, like the Biblical ten talents put out at interest, almost exclusively from the splendid munificence of private individuals.

William and Mary College was the offspring of a King and a Queen, and from the moment of its birth was hampered by its royal birthmark.

A spiritual promenade among the galleries of New England worthies reveals long lines of clear-cut faces marked with the insignia of high thought, —pale, intellectual, often fierce with the struggles of inward passion and inward suffering, highly spiritualised masks burnt translucent by the fires of a soul, prophetic of the Edwardses and Hutchinsons and Adamses yet to come, high-born men and women whose cold eyes flash steel or Stoic on occasion, portraits all nerve and muscle, as the wrinkling centuries move on and stamp their infinite crow's-feet into the gelatine mould of the soul, slightly starchy, ministerial, clerical here and there, flakes of clear quartz with veins of gold in it; a wondrous collection of human beings whom Copley or Trumbull or Peale or Stuart have singled out from the



JOHN ADAMS.  
From a steel engraving.



passing crowd, and fixed for ever on the canvas in speaking lineaments.

It was out of this New England that that monumental group of men (not yet large enough to be called heroes) sprang, who turn and gaze at us for a moment out of their golden frames and pass on: Samuel Adams, John Adams, Thomas Hutchinson, Benjamin Franklin, James Otis, Josiah Quincy, Joseph Warren, even Paul Revere, “the patriot Mercury” on his eternal Valkyrie-ride of news-telling to the remoter colonies. How these figures flame as we gaze at them, filling with an invisible life, quivering with an unseen intelligence, longing to tell us the story of their lives, eager to communicate the secrets of the year, 1764, 1768; of Feb. 22 and March 5, 1770; of Hutchinson’s “spy” letters; of the “Indians,” of Dec. 16, 1773; of tea-party and tea-ships as they sailed gaily into Boston Bay, not knowing it was the open mouth of the dragon!

For these dates and events stand out in bead-like distinctness among the linked anniversaries of the decade, incising their notches deep into the living marble of the time.

In 1765, the Virginia Resolutions of Patrick Henry, against the Stamp Act, had been the drop of rennet that ran the colonies together in massive coagulation. Three years later, owing to the enormous pressure of opinion at home and abroad, the odious Act was repealed, and another cockatrice’s egg, still more odious,—import tax on tea, glass, and painter’s material,—began to hatch out its

“vermin.” Troops arrive to enforce the Revenue Acts, and the curious little episode, dignified as “The Boston Massacre,” stains the 5th of March, 1770, with a red more indelible than Rizzio’s blood. The Committees of Correspondence and the Circular Letters of legislatures travel their planetary way from province to province during this decade, informing the people what was being done, and sending a glare of illumination into wildernesses unreached as yet by the Boston newspapers, or the *Virginia Gazette*. Exact historians, scrupulous of their dotted *i*’s and crossed *t*’s, still battle over the question whether Massachusetts or Virginia originated the Circular Letter and the Committee of Correspondence, those all-powerful agencies in the spread of the Revolution; whoever be the originator, they were in virulent activity at this time and earlier, and were the honeycombs in which the honey of the deflowered fields was stored up for future use,—honey often of the sardonic kind, turning into bitterness on the tongue of the consumer.

At last, we reach that moonlight night of icy December of the expiring year 1773, when, as by one giant exhalation, all the pent-up fiery energy of the ten years gone by, concentrated to fury and becoming ungovernable, wrenched itself loose and poured forth in a stream of rebellion.

Ludicrous as “the Boston Tea Party” may appear to some historians commenting with exaggerated hyperbole on the revolutionary days, the event was kindred in spirit to the mutilation of the *Hermæ*

which influenced Athens in the Peloponnesian war. Samuel Adams and Alcibiades were far apart in most particulars, but there are points enough of resemblance between them.

If Massachusetts was the tongue of the Revolution, Samuel Adams, “the chief incendiary,” was its chosen mouthpiece. This man, by pure intellectual ability, shrewdness, sharpness, “Yankee wit,” or whatever one may call it, became everything that it was possible for a man of that day to become, except President of the United States—selectman, clerk of the assembly, assemblyman, speaker, delegate to the first Continental Congress, lieutenant-governor, governor, and senator of the United States, rising like Washington with the buoyant irrepressible force of which we have previously spoken. As the hero of all the events that led straight up to the “tea-party,” Samuel Adams, the incarnation of Massachusetts, deserves abundant attention. He is the chief propulsive force of his time, a born leader, standing behind every forward movement, shoulder to shoulder with every difficulty, not a passive Caryatid merely supporting measures, but a glowing sculptor, rending the figure out of the mountain and dragging it with infinite toil over the sands of the desert.

Hardly a resolution of the town-meeting or the assembly that he did not draft or pen or edit or emend. His finger was in every pie: he lived at town-meeting rather than at home, and when he slept, doubtless, dreamt resolutions, amendments, remonstrances

to King and Parliament. He was, in short, one of those sublime busybodies (in the best sense) who meddle with everybody else's business, and with superlative unselfishness forget their own. On one of the currencies of 1776 stood the following legend:

*Fugio: a sun-dial: MIND YOUR BUSINESS*

a device which never could have occurred to Samuel Adams, for "minding his own business" was his last thought when he could mind the public's.

This endless attention to other people's affairs was what made Adams a thorn in the side of Massachusetts, and Massachusetts a crown of thorns on the brow of the British Parliament. The highest compliment which his second cousin, John Adams, could pay Charles Thompson, first and most famous clerk of the first Continental Congress of 1774, was that "he was the Sam Adams of Philadelphia."

The acute, high-voiced, *soprano* civilisation of the New England of this period was, indeed, a curious mixture of femininity and intense masculine strength. Its marked characteristic was the utter lack of self-control, inability to hold its tongue, excitability of temper more usually found in tropic latitudes, and a "gift of gab" perilous in the extreme to a good understanding with the mother-country. The east wind had entered into its counsels and constitution, and given a sharpness to the unruly member that amounted to acerbity.

As the magnificent curves of the New World swept north-eastward in graceful zigzag toward the



Arctic Circle, it seemed as if the little cluster of battling commonwealths, on the north-eastern tip, were being purposely pushed out into the tempestuous seas to steel their nerves, as tools of glittering steel are given edge in ice. Indeed, the threshold of the Revolution was the laboratory, in which the edge-tools of New England speech began to sharpen to that fineness which, only fifty years later, was to come to artistic consciousness on the fastidious lips of Emerson and Hawthorne, of Longfellow and Poe. The deep Puritan nature, introverted upon itself, speculating for ever upon the high themes of Providence and Fate, sunk in contemplation of the Biblical narratives, and their symbolic application to the Puritan world, Hebraic in the very flash of the eye and the utterance of the circumcised heart, enveloped in the metaphors of the Hebrew Commonwealth, as well as surrounded by the conditions of the Israelite wilderness, awfully smitten of conscience, awfully conscious of sin and guilt,—the deep Puritan nature began to develop that subtlety and eloquence, which the tinker of Bedford jail had somehow communicated to his followers by a kind of mystic chrism; the germs of mysticism and transcendentalism, always latent in the New England mind, began to stir uneasily in their sleep, and point towards germination on the lips of the Alcotts and Thoreaus, Fullers and Frothinghams, Ripleys and Brook Farm folk of a generation or two later.

It was with hundreds of thousands of people of this tried and clever kind, that the British Empire,

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE STRUGGLE BEGINS

**D**ROP by drop the cup of excitement had been filling up until at last, in 1774, the brim was reached and it seemed about to run over. Our preceding chapters rehearsed the grievances of the decade, the vacillating character of the British policy and administration, the views held in England itself as to the impolicy and unrighteousness of the course pursued by Grenville, Townshend, and Lord North, the perils of the standing army question, and the unwisdom of the Island Parliament in attempting to impose revenue and taxation laws on a whole continent, thousands of miles away, absolutely without representation in the assembly of Great Britain.

“England has long arms,” threatened one of those who favoured this policy, “but three thousand miles is a long way to extend them,” was the quick retort.

And this was precisely the difficulty. To be three thousand miles from headquarters, the stormy and treacherous sea between, with the old-fashioned frigates and store-ships lumbering heavily over the distances; to land a few thousand regulars at Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, behind which a popu-

lation of three millions was in arms—undisciplined it may be—to tease, torment, nag, destroy them force by force; to engage in a hopeless contest, contrary to all the dictates of reason, justice, and common sense, with their own flesh and blood, while France and Spain, bursting with recent hostility and spleen, looked on, waiting the chance to spring: the epic folly of such a course was apparent to Burke, Chatham, and Lord Camden from the beginning; and a far-sighted child might have foreseen the end.

“The spirit which resists your taxation in America,” said Chatham, “is the same that formerly opposed loans, benevolences, and ship-money in England. . . . This glorious spirit of Whiggism animates three millions in America who prefer poverty with liberty to gilded chains and sordid affluence, and who will die in defence of their rights as freemen. . . . For myself, I must declare that in all my reading and observation—and history has been my favorite study—I have read Thucydides, and I have studied and admired the master states of the world—that for solidity of reasoning, force of sagacity, and wisdom of conclusion under such a complication of difficult circumstances, no nation or body of men can stand in preference to the General Congress at Philadelphia. . . . All attempts to impose servitude upon such men, to establish despotism over such a mighty continental nation, must be vain, must be fatal. We shall be forced ultimately to retract. Let us retract while we can, not when we must!”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lecky, *England in the 18th Century*, vol. iii, p. 577.

This noble outburst spoke the plainest common sense to the assembled wisdom of Great Britain, yet it was not heeded. It seems, indeed, as if at certain periods madness seized a whole people, as it seized the French in 1870-71 and ran riot through the popular brain. There is a madness of just indignation and a madness of pure folly. Undoubtedly, says Thackeray in his *Four Georges*, the American war was very popular in England: great majorities supported it in Parliament. George III. even enjoyed the title of the "patriot King," and intrenched in the hereditary stubbornness which was characteristic of the Brunswick line, his feeble mind, already flickering on the verge of insanity, fixed itself on the one idea of chastising a rebellious people and bringing them back to their allegiance. Amiable and charming as the monarch appears in the fascinating pages of Fanny Burney, where he appears completely *en déshabillé*,—in dressing-gown and slippers as it were,—he possessed an inflexibility of nature that could not be turned, once an idea affecting the royal prerogative had fixed itself there.

Of this end of the actuating causes of the great struggle, Jefferson gave a clear conception when he wrote:

"The following is an epitome of the first fifteen years of his [George III.] reign. The colonies were taxed internally and externally; their essential interests sacrificed to individuals in Great Britain, their legislatures suspended; charters annulled; trials by juries taken away; their persons subjected to trans-

portation across the Atlantic, and to trial before foreign judicatories; their supplications for redress thought beneath answer; themselves published as cowards in the councils of their mother-country and courts of Europe; armed troops sent amongst them to enforce submission. Between these could be no hesitation. They closed in the appeal to arms. They declared themselves independent states. They confederated together into one great republic; thus securing to every state the benefit of an union of their whole force. In each state separately a new form of government was established.”<sup>1</sup>

Meantime, events were hurrying on in America with frightful rapidity. England was so far away, and the means of communication so slow and uncertain, that historic happenings of great magnitude and far-reaching consequences had been conceived, born, and realised, before an intimation of their existence reached the shores of Albion. In March, 1774, while Boston Bay was still flavoured with the *Bohea* that had been thrown into it, the Boston Port Bill was passed in retaliation for the East India Company's tea, the port was sealed up hermetically against outside trade, and Parliament undertook to remove the capital to Salem, a word which with bitter irony meant “Peace.” News of what was going on flew, in some incredible manner, through the length and breadth of the land. The excitement grew tense. There must have been enormous horse-back travel in those days, to carry the news-budgets

<sup>1</sup> Jefferson, *Notes on Virginia*, p. 158.

from town to town and from colony to colony, until New Hampshire and Georgia (loyally named from the Brunswick line) were talking about the same things almost simultaneously—the insults put on Franklin in London, the scandal of the Hutchinson letters, the ridicule and abuse hurled by old Sam Johnson on the Americans as “a race of convicts—a pack of rascals, Sir!” the quartering of troops everywhere, and the blind obstinacy of Parliament in insisting on asserting its unconditional supremacy over everything American. Even the coolest natures kindled and caught heat from the wide-spread discussions. We find Washington presiding over protesting bodies of neighbours and friends in Fairfax County (where his autograph will and the old county record-books, filled with references to him, are still to be seen), and at last see the patriot *en route* for Williamsburg as a delegate, bearing to the burgesses the admirable “Fairfax Resolves” on the situation, in the handwriting of George Mason. About the middle of May he reached Williamsburg, and kept up courteous relations with Lord Dunmore all the time that his very soul must have burned with indignation against him. It is almost pathetic to read of the balls and dinner-parties at the “Palace,” to which Washington and the more influential burgesses were invited, when the hearts of all were unstrung, and gloom reigned supreme over the little city.

As soon as the news of the Boston Port Bill reached Williamsburg, the burgesses met in solemn

conclave to remonstrate, and appointed June 1st as a day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer to supplicate the Almighty to avert the horrors of a war.

Lord Dunmore with incisive speech dissolved the burgesses.

But the burgesses were not thus to be punished like unruly children: they re-assembled immediately in the famous Apollo Room of the Raleigh Tavern, and called a convention to assemble August 1st for the purpose of further action on the parliamentary measures, and the selection of delegates to a proposed Continental Congress at Philadelphia, September 5, 1774. Massachusetts almost simultaneously proposed the same measure and chose delegates. Virginia chose Washington, Richard Henry Lee and Patrick Henry (the great orators), Richard Bland, Peyton Randolph, Edmund Pendleton, and Benjamin Harrison (ancestor of the two presidents).

"Went to church and fasted all day," is the single graphic entry in Washington's Diary, June 1, 1774.

The other colonies and provinces now went to work to choose their most distinguished and public-spirited men as delegates to the Congress, and soon the highways were dotted with horsemen or old-fashioned chariots, bearing the patriots to the banks of the Schuylkill. On August 31st, Washington, Patrick Henry, and Edmund Pendleton set out from Mount Vernon, and turned their horses' heads towards Philadelphia. Four days later they arrived and soon the rooms of Carpenters' Hall (where they assembled) echoed with the passionate and majestic

words and written resolutions, which aroused the intense sympathy and admiration of Lord Chatham. Peyton Randolph of Virginia was chosen president, and the moulding of the celebrated bill of grievances and remonstrances to the Crown was left largely in the hands of Richard Henry Lee and Patrick Henry. Each colony had sent its shrewdest and best men. Illustrious names were there from South Carolina, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York, and the smaller colonies were not behind. For eloquence, Rutledge of South Carolina took the palm, but for solid information and efficiency, Colonel Washington stood head and shoulders above every one else, in Henry's opinion. Silas Deane and John Adams were delighted with the bearing of the Southerners. "There are some fine fellows come from Virginia," said Joseph Reed, "but they are very high. We understand that they are the capital men of the colony."

"It is related that the Earl of Dartmouth inquired of an American, in London, of how many members the Congress consisted? the reply was, 'Fifty-two.'—'Why that is the number of cards in a pack,' said his lordship; 'how many *knaves* are there?'—'Not one,' answered the American, 'your lordship will please to recollect that *knaves* are *court* cards.'" <sup>1</sup>

For fifty-one days the Congress wrestled with its mighty problems, now of life and death to all.

"For seven weeks of almost continuous session did it hammer its stiff business into shape, never

<sup>1</sup> Lossing, *Washington and the American Republic*, vol. i, p. 441.



wearying of deliberation or debate, till it could put forth papers to the world—an address to the King, memorials to the people of Great Britain and to the people of British America, their fellow-subjects, and a solemn Declaration of Rights—which should mark it no revolutionary body, but a congress of just and thoughtful Englishmen, in love, not with license or rebellion, but with right and wholesome liberty. Their only act of aggression was the formation of an ‘American Association,’ pledged against trade with Great Britain till the legislation of which they complained should be repealed. Their only intimation of intentions for the future was a resolution to meet again the next spring, should their prayers not meanwhile be heeded.

“Washington turned homeward from the congress with thoughts and purposes every way deepened and matured. It had been a mere seven weeks’ conference; no one had deemed the congress a government, or had spoken of any object save peace and accommodation; but no one could foresee the issue of what had been done.”<sup>1</sup>

This Congress indeed was nothing more than a Solemn League and Covenant of Committees of Correspondence, Committees of Safety, delegations from now outlawed provincial assemblies, Sons of Liberty working on the desperate task of the birth of a new nation. Through these agencies, information flew from town to town. “To Arms!” rang like a battle-cry all over America.

The months succeeding October, 1774, to March,

<sup>1</sup> Woodrow Wilson, *George Washington*, p. 164.

1775, were months not of words but of deeds: men met, assemblies convened, only to arm themselves, to drill, to elect officers, to secure ammunition, to prepare for civil war.

The vernal equinox of March, 1775, saw the second great revolutionary convention of Virginia meet at Richmond, for the purpose of making military preparations of defence. It was at this convention that Patrick Henry, who dominated it with his tongue of fire, introduced his memorable resolutions of resistance, and ended them with a speech in which the ever-famous words occur:

“It is in vain, sir, to extenuate the matter. Gentlemen may cry peace, peace, but there is no peace. The war is actually begun. The next gale that sweeps from the north will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms. Our brethren are already in the field. Why stand we here idle? What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty, or give me death!”<sup>1</sup>

Jefferson, a member of the body, truly pronounced Henry “the leader of the Revolution,” “far in advance of the rest of us.” A few weeks later, on the 19th of April, a clash between the “minute men” of Massachusetts and General Gage’s British soldiers occurred at the little town of Lexington, while the regulars were on their way to Concord (strange

<sup>1</sup> Tyler, *Patrick Henry*, p 128,



CARPENTERS' HALL, PHILADELPHIA.  
Wherein met the first Continental Congress, 1774.



name for the times!) to seize the military stores there accumulated, and soon three hundred of the poor fellows bit the dust in their foolish pride of subjugation. The rest retreated hastily to Boston, and Paul Revere began another of his celebrated rides (in ancient Grecian wise) to scatter the news far South.

Two days later, "the rape of the Gunpowder" by Lord Dunmore brought affairs in Virginia to an acute crisis. He landed marines in the night at Williamsburg, and spirited away from the old "Powder Horn" magazine all the powder stowed there for the defence of the colony.

This excited intense indignation, and five thousand men, virtually led by Patrick Henry (really captain only of his own company), rushed toward Williamsburg demanding restitution of the powder or its value in money.

The terrified Earl chose the latter course, and the money was handed over to Henry. Lady Dunmore and her daughters fled to a place of safety. Twenty days later Philadelphia saw the second solemn revolutionary Congress convene, May 10th.

The Virginia delegates were the same as before. John Hancock, a patriotic citizen and wealthy "grandee" from Massachusetts, a friend and favourite of Samuel Adams, was president of the Congress. Its master stroke was the election of Colonel Washington Commander-in-chief of the forces of the United Colonies. The Virginian had first been proposed by John Adams, but no formal action was

taken until he was, later, nominated to the position by Thomas Johnson of Maryland.

“TO MRS. MARTHA WASHINGTON

“Philadelphia, 18 June, 1775.

“MY DEAREST,

“I am now set down to write to you on a subject, which fills me with inexpressible concern, and this concern is greatly aggravated and increased, when I reflect upon the uneasiness I know it will give you. It has been determined in Congress, that the whole army raised for the defence of the American cause shall be put under my care, and that it is necessary for me to proceed immediately to Boston to take upon me the command of it.

“You may believe me, my dear Patsy, when I assure you, in the most solemn manner, that, so far from seeking this appointment, I have used every endeavor in my power to avoid it, not only from my unwillingness to part with you and the family, but from a consciousness of its being a trust too great for my capacity, and that I should enjoy more real happiness in one month with you at home, than I have the most distant prospect of finding abroad, if my stay were to be seven times seven years. But as it has been a kind of destiny, that has thrown me upon this service, I shall hope that my undertaking it is designed to answer some good purpose. You might, and I suppose did perceive, from the tenor of my letters, that I was apprehensive I could not avoid this appointment, as I did not pretend to intimate when I should return. That was the case. It was

utterly out of my power to refuse this appointment, without exposing my character to such censures, as would have reflected dishonor upon myself, and given pain to my friends. This, I am sure, could not, and ought not, to be pleasing to you, and must have lessened me considerably in my own esteem. I shall rely, therefore, confidently on that Providence, which has heretofore preserved and been bountiful to me, not doubting but that I shall return safe to you in the fall. I shall feel no pain from the toil or the danger of the campaign; my unhappiness will flow from the uneasiness I know you will feel from being left alone. I therefore beg, that you will summon your whole fortitude, and pass your time as agreeably as possible. Nothing will give me so much sincere satisfaction as to hear this, and to hear it from your own pen. My earnest and ardent desire is, that you would pursue any plan that is most likely to produce content, and a tolerable degree of tranquillity, as it must add greatly to my uneasy feelings to hear, that you are dissatisfied or complaining at what I really could not avoid.

“As life is always uncertain, and common prudence dictates to every man the necessity of settling his temporal concerns, while it is in his power, and while the mind is calm and undisturbed, I have, since I came to this place (for I had not time to do it before I left home) got Colonel Pendleton to draft a will for me, by the directions I gave him, which will I now enclose. The provision made for you in case of my death will, I hope, be agreeable.

“I shall add nothing more, as I have several letters to write, but to desire that you will remember me to your friends, and to assure you that I am, with

the most unfeigned regard, my dear Patsy, your affectionate, etc.”<sup>1</sup>

The modesty of this letter is only paralleled by that of the Duke of Wellington, of almost the same date, though forty years later, giving the tidings of the battle of Waterloo.

The two dates mark eras in the history of modern times.

The fires of rebellion were now burning brightly all along the coast line. At Boston, the centre of the turbulence, sixteen thousand provincials had assembled from all sides, and threatened the ten thousand regulars gathered there to protect British interests. The inactivity of these soldiers was nobly vindicated by Lord Chatham that same year in the words of Lord Brougham:

“In 1775, he made a most brilliant speech on the war. Speaking of General Gage’s inactivity, he said he could not be blamed; it was inevitable. ‘But what a miserable condition,’ he exclaimed, ‘is ours, where disgrace is prudence, and where it is necessary to be contemptible! You must repeal these acts,’ (he said, alluding to the Boston Port and Massachusetts Bay Bills,) ‘and you WILL repeal them. I pledged myself for it, that you will repeal them. I stake my reputation on it. I will consent to be taken for an idiot if they are not finally repealed.’ Every one knows how true this prophesy proved. The concluding sentence of the speech has been often cited: ‘If the ministers persevere in misleading the King, I will

<sup>1</sup> Ford, *Writings of George Washington*, vol. ii, p. 483.



not say that they can alienate the affections of his subjects from his crown; but I will affirm that they will make the crown not worth his wearing. I will not say that the King is betrayed; but I will pronounce that the Kingdom is undone.’

“Again, in 1777, after describing the cause of the war and ‘the traffic and barter driven with every little pitiful German Prince that sells his subjects to the shambles of a foreign country,’ he adds: ‘The mercenary aid on which you rely irritates to an incurable resentment the minds of your enemies, whom you overrun with the sordid sons of rapine and of plunder, devoting them and their possessions to the rapacity of hireling cruelty! If I were an American as I am an Englishman, while a foreign troop was landed in my country, I never would lay down my arms, never! never! never!’”

Undoubtedly, this kind of inactivity and hesitancy proved in the end fatal to the British cause: they never could persuade themselves that the Americans would persevere in so hopeless-looking a case; they always believed they would go down before the invincible valour of the regulars, and sue for peace and pardon on short notice.

In this they were woefully mistaken. Months before, Patrick Henry (soon to be appointed commander of all the Virginia forces and, a little later, chosen first republican Governor of the State) had lifted up a warning voice and proclaimed the impossibility of success for the English. The assemblages of armed men everywhere gathering were not mere mobs, undisciplined, lawless, and independent as

they might seem. Thousands of the 231,000 who served in the Revolution were trained Indian fighters, frontiersmen, hunters, trappers, expert with gun and hatchet, resourceful, hardened to every kind of toil, a yeomanry such as perhaps the world had not up to that date seen. As marksmen many of the 67,000 men furnished by the gallant little colony of Massachusetts to the Revolutionary forces were famous. The following anecdote throws light on the subject:

“Among the incidents of the British possession of the town, Andrews relates two, which indicate that the dry humor and dialect of the Yankee are not of recent discovery.

“It’s common for the soldiers to fire at a target fixed in the stream at the bottom of the *Common*. A countryman stood by a few days ago, and laughed very heartily at a whole regiment’s firing, and not being able to hit it. The officer observed him, and asked why he laughed. ‘Perhaps you’ll be affronted if I tell you,’ replied the countryman. No, he would not, he said. ‘*Why then,*’ says he, ‘I laugh to see how awkward they fire, *why,* I’ll be bound I hit it ten times running.’—‘Ah! will you?’ replied the officer. ‘Come try.—Soldiers, go and bring five of the best guns, and load ’em for this honest man.’—‘Why, you need not bring so many: let me have any one that comes to hand,’ replied the other. But I chuse to load *myself*.’ He accordingly loaded, and asked the officer where he should fire. He replied, ‘To the right,’ when he pulled tricker, and drove the ball as near the right as possible. The officer was amazed,

and said he could not do it again, as that was only by chance. He loaded again. 'Where shall I fire?'—'*To the left,*' when he performed as well as before. 'Come, once more!' says the officer. He prepared the third time. 'Where shall I fire *naow?*'—'*In the centre.*' He took aim, and the ball went as exact in the middle as possible. The officers as well as soldiers stared, and thought the devil was in the man. '*Why,*' says the countryman, 'I'll tell you *naow*. I have got a boy at home that will toss up an apple, and shoot out all the seeds as it's coming down.'"<sup>1</sup>

It was a "mob" of this sort that greeted Washington when he arrived at Boston, shortly after the battle of Bunker Hill, June, 1775: men who had an intelligent comprehension of what they fought for, and why they fought: volunteers who, by their own volition, had enlisted for longer or shorter terms, to defend sacred rights of home and fireside, and great constitutional principles on which their very existence depended.

In the battle on and around Bunker Hill, a thousand splendid redcoats and many a gallant officer gave bloody tribute to the marksmanship and valour and power to stand of the "backwoodsmen." The sharp rattle of musketry from the independents proved, in this first conflict, almost a match for the platoon firing and massed advance of historic regiments, whose laurels had been gained on European battle-fields. It was a trial of strength which boded

<sup>1</sup> H. E. Scudder, *Men and Manners in America One Hundred Years Ago*, p. 21.

well for the Americans. The flying engagement of Lexington, and the determined though undisciplined resistance of Bunker Hill, were to be types of the whole six years and a half of war. Until Baron von Steuben came to Washington at Valley Forge, in 1778, the Americans knew little—one might better say, absolutely nothing—of regular discipline. The camp-fire, the Indian trail, the lonely bivouac in the wood, the log-cabin pierced with holes for flint-locks, the solitary vigil against war-whoop and scalping-knife, the drift down the winding river, the plunge into the untrodden wilderness: these had been their “Jomini,” their manuals of drill and exercise, their text-books in arms.

News of the Bunker Hill engagement had indeed reached Washington as he journeyed on horseback to Cambridge, to assume command of the army, and the way seemed wonderfully—to some Providentially—cleared for the new commander to enter upon his novel responsibilities, before the severe season set in. For though in this engagement the Americans suffered a check, their spirit came out brilliantly and showed a mettle that augured ill to their foes in the future. The invincible spirit of General Putnam, Colonels Prescott, Stark, Gardner, Gridley, Dr. Warren, and the other American commanders, the valour of the ill-fed and disorganised militiamen behind their amateur redoubts on Breed’s and Bunker Hills, opposite Boston, the stout resistance offered by fifteen hundred men to the whole British army and fleet under General Howe and Sir Henry Clin-

ton, then in Boston, instantly predicted to all thoughtful men the stubborn and sanguinary nature of the conflict just begun.

The 17th of June, 1775, was thus a memorable date in American history, afterwards commemorated by the obelisk raised on Bunker Hill, the cornerstone of which was laid by LaFayette.

The slaughter of nearly 1500 men of the same flesh and blood—450 on the American, 1054 on the British side,—the death of the noble Warren and Major Pitcairn, the wounding of Lord Howe himself, the tenacity and fury shown on both sides, were omens terrible indeed to the lovers of peace, and sent thrills of pride and horror over the whole world of that day.

When Washington reached Cambridge, July 3, 1775, Boston was already in a state of siege, and the new Commander-in-chief had his hands full.

Settling first in the house of the president of Harvard College, Washington transferred his headquarters, later, to Craigie House, afterwards well-known as the Cambridge residence of the poet, Longfellow. From now on, begins an absolutely busy and preoccupied life for Washington, such as he had never lived before. His magnanimous conduct in declining to receive a salary as General, in return for his services, had excited universal applause: all he claimed was a bare reimbursement for his private expenses, which from this time appear scrupulously recorded in pounds, shillings, and pence in his day-books. The letters and newspapers of this time re-

cord his progress from town to town, from Philadelphia to New York, through Connecticut and Rhode Island to Cambridge. Of his personal appearance at the time, so distinguished by gravity, dignity, and intelligence, we have the following testimony:

“July 2nd, 1775.—I have been much gratified this day with a view of General Washington. His Excellency was on horseback in company with several military gentlemen. It was not difficult to distinguish him from all others; his personal appearance is truly noble and majestic; being tall and well proportioned. His dress is a blue coat with buff-colored facings, a rich epaulette on each shoulder, buff underdress, and an elegant small sword; a black cockade in his hat.”<sup>1</sup>

General Greene in writing to Samuel Ward, July 14th, says:

“His Excellency, General Washington, has arrived amongst us, universally admired. Joy was visible in every countenance, and it seemed as if the spirit of conquest breathed through the whole army. I hope we shall be taught, to copy his example, and to prefer the love of liberty, in this time of public danger to all the soft pleasures of domestic life, and support ourselves with manly fortitude amidst all the dangers and hardships that attend a state of war. And I doubt not, under the General’s wise direction, we shall establish such excellent order and strictness of discipline as to invite victory to attend him wherever he goes.”

<sup>1</sup> Baker, *Itinerary of General Washington, 1775-1783*, p. 12.

He at once established that remarkable system of dispatches to Congress—long, detailed, explicit—from which he never swerved during the entire war, and which kept this body circumstantially informed of every minutest need, hope, and aspiration. They form a kind of Cæsar's *Commentaries* on the War of the Revolution.

The first and ever-increasing need was ammunition: only nine rounds per man remained after the battle of Bunker Hill. The next was a military chest—no money was forthcoming; a commissary-general; quartermaster-general; ten thousand hunting-shirts for the ill-clad troops; hospital-stores for the sick; a military staff: in short, a thousand things never dreamt of by the citizen Congress, unfamiliar with the organisation of armies. Letters proffering help poured in from General Schuyler, Governor Trumbull of Connecticut, Generals Putnam and Gates, Richard Henry Lee and other members of Congress, all proclaiming Washington's appointment Providential and destined to save the empire.

For even yet—July, 1775—the Congress at Philadelphia was, through the pen of John Dickinson, breathing timid hopes of reconciliation with the mother-country. It was the year of Burke's magnificent speech on "Conciliation with the Colonies," now one of the classics of British oratory. It is on abundant record that Franklin, Jefferson, and Washington never conceived a final separation possible until, a year later, the immortal Declaration had shaped itself distinctly—after a thousand remon-

strances, petitions, expostulations in vain—in the minds of the Committee of Five who drafted it. The invading troops were delicately called “ministerial,” not royal troops, so that the whole responsibility for the war might be thrown upon Parliament and the Ministry, not upon the King.

The Commander-in-chief, on his white Arabian charger, soon became a well-known figure as he journeyed to and fro through the camps, on his tireless mission of inspection, reconnaissance, redoubt-building, and military engineering, for the benefit of all and for the strengthening of his position. He had judiciously divided his army into three corps, the left commanded by Charles Lee (afterwards known as “the soldier of fortune”), the centre at Cambridge under General Putnam, and the right at Roxbury under General Ward.

The siege of Boston, as it was soon called, was now actively begun. Generals Howe, Clinton, Gage, and Burgoyne (son-in-law of the Earl of Derby) commanded the British forces.

Monster petitions were meanwhile being handed around by John Wilkes (Lord Mayor of London) and eleven hundred of the wealthiest citizens of the metropolis, imploring the King to stop in his ruinous policy to his loyal subjects; even Congress thanked their British fellow-citizens for their earnest endeavours to avert war; but all was in vain.

The middle and end of the year were marked by brilliant successes for the Americans under Benedict Arnold, Ethan Allen, General Schuyler, and the he-





MAJOR-GENERAL CHARLES LEE.  
From an English engraving published in 1776.



roic Montgomery, in the Canadian campaign against Sir Guy Carleton on Lake Champlain, Montreal, and Quebec. Ticonderoga and Crown Point, Chambly, and St. John, fell, loaded with stores of ammunition, cannon, and provisions, into the hands of the patriots and gave infinite encouragement to the cause. In the course of the campaign, appeared numerous figures afterwards celebrated in the annals of the war: Major André, Benedict Arnold, Aaron Burr (the wayward grandson of Jonathan Edwards, later Vice-President of the United States), and William Pitt, secretary to Sir Guy Carleton, son of the great Earl, afterwards prime minister of Great Britain. Washington and Gage, the rival commanders at Boston, had been intimately associated together with Braddock in his tragic expedition against Fort Du Quesne.

The year, however, was to end in disaster, for December 31st saw the crushing defeat and death of Montgomery at Quebec, Arnold with a bullet through his leg, Captain Daniel Morgan and his heroic riflemen surrounded and captured, and the high hopes of the Americans annihilated.

The glory of the whole campaign seemed darkened by this disaster; yet countervailing distinctions awaited the Americans. On January 1, 1776, the first flag of the Continental Army was unfurled at Cambridge, for the first time. It consisted of thirteen stripes of alternate red and white, with a "union Jack" of the crosses of St. George and St. Andrew in the upper corner, later to be substituted by

a blue field sprinkled with white stars, a new star for every new State. Two months and a half later, on the ever-memorable 20th of March, 1776, the American army entered Boston, after the hurried retreat of Lord Howe with nine thousand regulars and nine hundred loyalists. The patriot army had seized and fortified Dorchester Heights, which completely commanded the British positions and rendered their immediate evacuation imperative. The town was humanely allowed to stand as it was without being burned, a policy imitated by Washington a few months later when he evacuated New York.

At this very time, the obnoxious manifesto of Lord North against the rebellion in the name of the King was under discussion in Parliament, and the hiring of 17,500 "Hessians" at thirty-six dollars a head for service in America roused the ridicule and indignation of Frederick the Great and all Europe.

A large number of these stupid mercenaries, on their arrival in America, became enamoured of their new surroundings, deserted or were "captured" or married, and settled down in comfortable homes far from the petty German tyrants who had sold them to infamy and death in a foreign land.

Great was the joy over the fall of Boston; the thanks of Congress and of many provincial assemblies poured in upon Washington and his troops. Harvard conferred the degree of LL. D. on the chief, and admiration rose almost to adoration.

Leaving five regiments under General Ward to garrison Boston, Washington swiftly turned to New York, selected and fortified commanding spots in its neighbourhood, and rode to Philadelphia to receive the orders and felicitations of Congress. At first with only nine or ten thousand men he hastened to occupy and put up defensive works on Long Island, at Harlem Heights, King's Bridge, and Fort Washington. The vast strategic importance of New York to both sides was incalculable. Opening like great jaws into the heart of the land, the harbour was spacious enough to float the navies of the world, and draw up into the interior the frigates and flotillas of a sea power that was regarded as invincible. Whoever first occupied this impregnable position might well seem to be master of the continent.

On the 3rd of July, the Bay suddenly became white with over a hundred sail, and Lord Howe proceeded to land on Staten Island some of the twenty-five regiments deemed sufficient by the ministry for the conquest of the New World.

The day after, July 4th, 1776, proclaimed to the civilised world that the United States had come into existence, that all allegiance to Great Britain had been absolutely thrown off, and that a free and sovereign people now ruled over the Western Hemisphere. Written at the most solemn moment of the Revolution, when all hope of reconciliation had absolutely died out, the sentences of the Declaration of Independence rang with an eloquence which startled all mankind and asserted truths so univer-

sally held to be beyond question, that it became at once the text-book of the newer constitutions in all modern constitutional movements.

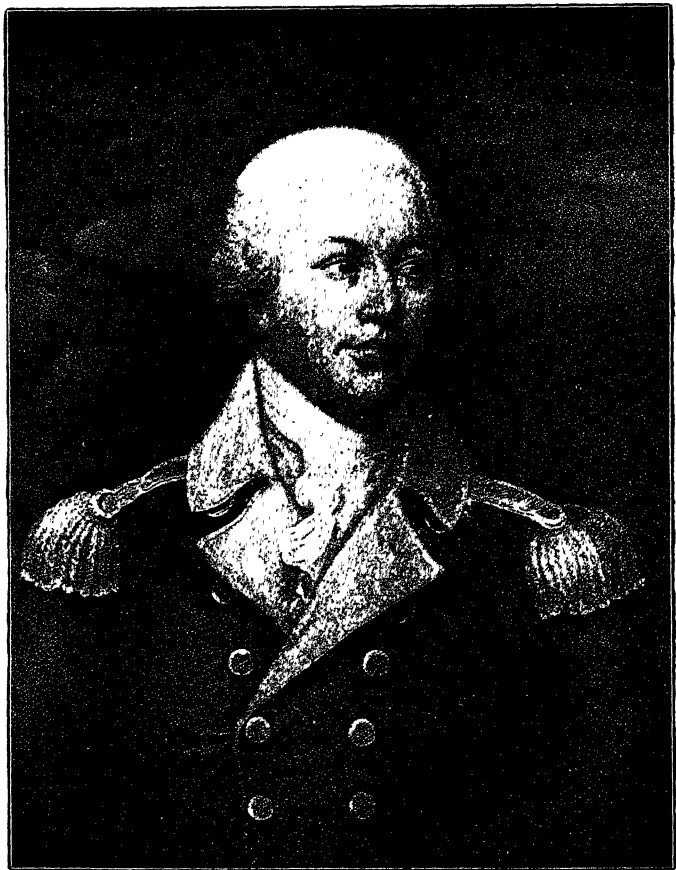
The writer of this celebrated document was Thomas Jefferson, afterwards Governor of Virginia, Secretary of State, and third President of the United States. His associates on the committee were John Adams (second President of the United States), Benjamin Franklin, Roger Sherman, and Robert Livingston. Adams and Jefferson both lived until the 4th of July, 1826, when, singularly enough, both expired on the same day within a few hours of each other.

The opening paragraphs are as follows :

“A Declaration By The Representatives Of The United States Of America, In General Congress Assembled.

“ When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature’s God entitle them, a decent respect for the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

“ We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any



MAJOR-GENERAL NATHANAEL GREENE.  
From the painting by Col. John Trumbull.





form of government becomes destructive of these ends it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of these colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former system of government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these states. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world, etc., etc., etc. . . .

“We, therefore, the representatives of the United States of America in General Congress assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the name and by the authority of the good people of these colonies, solemnly publish and declare that these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent states; that they are absolved from all alle-

giance to the British crown, and that all political connection between them and the state of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved; and that, as free and independent states, they have full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to do all other acts and things which independent states may of right do.

“And for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.”

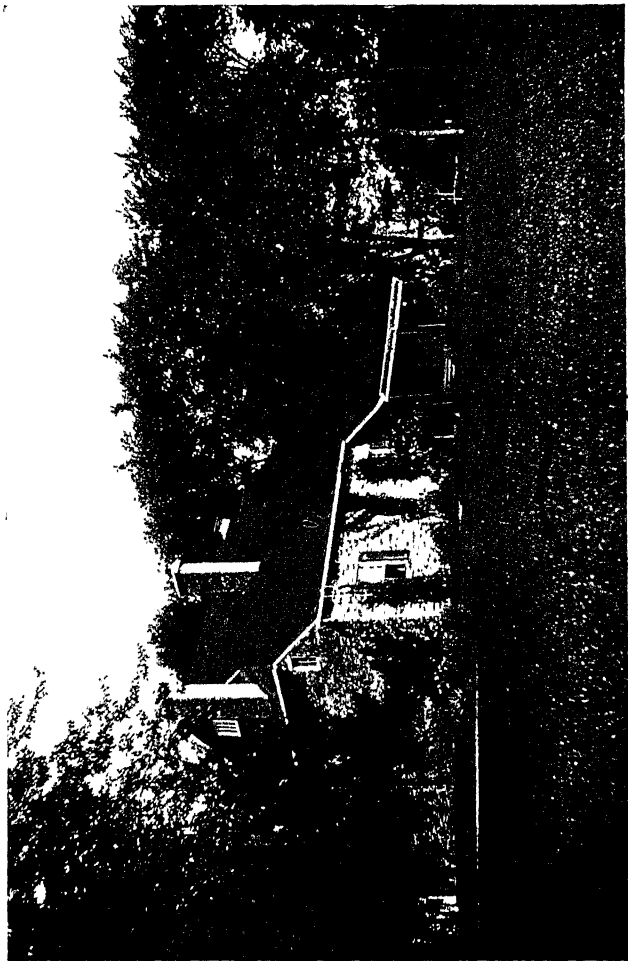
## CHAPTER XV

### THE HEART OF THE REVOLUTION

NOT many days elapsed before Washington had the Declaration of Independence publicly read, from the balcony of the old City Hall in Wall Street, to the assembled commands. All doubt and hesitation were now, once and for ever, cast away: the United Colonies were in full revolution: men cast in their lot either for or against it; and neutrality was no longer possible. The large and important body of loyalists were in acute distress. Business interests, ties of blood and of association bound them strongly to England; yet the patriot armies were full of their kinspeople, and, whichever way they turned, they were searched by the "fires of civil discord," levied upon by both sides, insulted and detested by both Monarchists and Republicans, and in a fair way to be ground to pieces between the two. Large numbers of Quakers, Canadians, Anglicised French, Dutch, and even numbers of influential colonial families of Virginia, Maryland, North and South Carolina, sided with the British, and entangled Washington and the Congress in infinite perplexities and difficulties. Plots to kidnap or murder Washington began to hatch during the next few months; cabals and intrigues arose, in

and out of the army; and the launching of the Revolution was beset with dangers.

Just one year had passed away, since Washington had mounted his horse and ridden proudly away to Cambridge to assume the position of Commander-in-chief. The siege and fall of Boston had signalled the beginning of the struggle as a brilliant success. Without training in the regular army, destitute of technical knowledge as a soldier, educated indeed in the woods purely as an Indian fighter, or against wandering bodies of nomad French and Canadians, Washington began now, in the face of endless difficulties, to develop that genius for command and for the utilisation of scant resources, which excited the admiration of Frederick the Great, and, later, of Cornwallis and Napoleon. "The finger of God was in it," remarked Bonaparte, and when, five years later, the English commander handed over his sword at Yorktown, he could not repress his admiration for the manner in which his captor had conducted the Jersey campaign, now about to open. Strategically weak as was the American's position at any given point on the enormously extended line—Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Norfolk, Cape Fear, Charleston—yet so full of resource was Washington, assisted by Generals Gates and Mifflin and the Congressional Board of War, that the invaders were successively baffled, checked, circumvented, surrounded at every point, and confessed themselves absolutely worn to pieces by the "Fabian policy" of the Americans. No other policy was practicable



WASHINGTON'S HEADQUARTERS AT NEWBURGH ON THE HUDSON.



at a time when the Articles of Confederation were hardly signed, centralised government did not exist, Congress, itself, was full of lukewarm adherents of the Declaration, and jealousies, deep-seated and alarming, between different sections of the country began to manifest themselves in and out of Philadelphia, the temporary continental capital.

The alertness, resourcefulness, vigilance, and indomitable spirit of Washington and his noble corps of frontier-bred generals—Putnam, Arnold, Andrew Lewis, Montgomery, Schuyler, Sullivan, Greene, Moultrie, Marion, and Ward—rose equal to the occasion, and buoyed up the faltering steps of the patriots in a fashion which ultimately rendered them as steadfast as the rock.

“In Washington,” says John Fiske, “were combined all the highest qualities of a general—dogged tenacity of purpose, endless fertility in resource, sleepless vigilance, and unfailing courage. No enemy ever caught him unawares and he never let slip an opportunity for striking back. He had a rare geographical instinct, always knew where the strongest position was and how to reach it. He was a master of the art of concealing his own plan and detecting his adversary’s. He knew better than to hazard everything on the result of a single contest; because of the enemy’s superior force he was so often obliged to refuse battle that some of his impatient critics called him slow; but no general was ever quicker in dealing heavy blows when the proper moment arrived. He was neither unduly elated by victory nor discouraged by defeat. When all others lost heart, he was bravest; and at the

very moment when ruin seemed to stare him in the face, he was craftily preparing disaster and confusion for the enemy. To the highest qualities of a military commander there were united in Washington those of a political leader. From early youth he possessed the art of winning men's confidence. He was simple without awkwardness, honest without bluntness, and endowed with rare discretion and tact. His temper was fiery and on occasions he could use pretty strong language, but anger or disappointment was never allowed to disturb the justice and kindness of his judgment. Men felt themselves safe in putting entire trust in his head and his heart, and they were never deceived. Thus he soon obtained such a hold upon the people as few statesmen ever possessed. It was this grand character that with his clear intelligence and unflagging industry enabled him to lead the nation triumphantly through the perils of the Revolutionary War. He had almost every imaginable hardship to contend with—envious rivals, treachery and mutiny in the camp, interference on the part of Congress, jealousies between the states, want of men and money; yet all these difficulties he vanquished. Whether victorious or defeated in the field, he baffled the enemy in the first year's great campaign, and in the second year's; and then for four years more upheld the cause, until heart-sickening delay was ended in glorious triumph. It is very doubtful if without Washington the struggle for independence would have succeeded. Other men were important—he was indispensable."

Add to this fine tribute the words of the eminent historian, John Richard Green:



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“No nobler figure, ever stood in the fore front of a nation’s life. Washington was grave and courteous in address; his manners were simple and unpretending; his silence and the serene calmness of his temper spoke of a perfect self-mastery. But there was little in his outer bearing to reveal the grandeur of soul, which lifts his figure, with all the simple majesty of an ancient statue, out of the smaller passions, the meaner impulses of the world around him. What recommended him for command was simply his weight among his fellow-land-owners of Virginia, and the experience of war, which he had gained by services in border contests with the French and Indians, as well as in Braddock’s luckless expedition against Fort Duquesne. It was only as the weary fight went on that the colonists discovered, however slowly and imperfectly, the greatness of their leader, his clear judgment, his heroic endurance, his silence under difficulties, his calmness in the hour of danger or defeat; the patience with which he waited, the quickness and hardness with which he struck, the lofty and serene sense of duty that never swerved from its task through resentment or jealousy, that never through war or peace felt the touch of a meaner ambition, that knew no aim save that of guiding the freedom of his fellow-countrymen, and no personal longing save that of returning to his own fireside when their freedom was secured.”

Washington’s “centurie of praise” would be incomplete without the words of another great Englishman, whose superlative insight into character was never blinded by insular prejudice.

“He had the glory,” wrote Thackeray, “of facing and overcoming not only veterans amply provided and inured to war, but wretchedness, cold, hunger, dissensions, treason within his own camp, where all must have gone to rack but for the pure unquenchable flame of patriotism that was for ever burning in the bosom of the heroic leader. What a constancy, what magnanimity, what a surprising persistency against fortune! Washington before the enemy was no better nor braver than hundreds that fought with him or against him. But Washington, the chief of a nation in arms; doing battle with distracted parties; calm in the midst of conspiracy; serene against the open foe before him and the darker enemies at his back; Washington inspiring order and spirit into troops hungry and in rags; stung by ingratitude, but betraying no anger,—and never so sublime as on that day when he laid down his victorious sword and sought his noble retirement—here indeed is a character to admire and revere, a life without a stain, a fame without a flaw.”

If Washington was in any sense “Fabius,” he was a Fabius to whose name the not ignoble epithet “Maximus” must be attached.

“The die is cast,” cried George III., “and the colonies must either triumph or submit.”

And what was the character of the King whom fate or fortune had pitted against the American, in whose veins ran the strength, the coolness, the courage, the unconquerable will of an ancestry far more perfectly English than the King’s? An Amer-

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ican would hesitate to write the words: let them, therefore, fall from the pen of an English historian:

“During the first ten years of his reign,” says Green, “he managed to reduce government to a shadow, and to turn the loyalty of his subjects at home into disaffection. Before twenty years were over he had forced the American colonies into revolt and independence and brought England to what then seemed the brink of ruin. Work such as this has sometimes been done by very great men, and often by very wicked and profligate men; but George was neither profligate nor great. He had a smaller mind than any English King before him since James II. He was wretchedly educated and his natural powers were of the meanest sort. Nor had he the capacity for using greater minds than his own, by which some sovereigns have concealed their natural littleness. On the contrary his only feeling toward great men was one of jealousy and hate. But dull and petty as his temper was, he was clear as to his purpose and obstinate in the pursuit of it; and his purpose was to rule. . . .

“The blow which shattered the attempt of England to wield an autocratic power over her colonies, shattered the attempt of the King to establish an autocratic power over England itself. The ministry, which bore the name of Lord North, had been a mere screen for the administration of George III., and its ruin was the ruin of the system he had striven to build up. Never again was the crown to possess such power as he had wielded. . . .

“The irony of fate doomed him to take the first

step in an organic change which has converted that aristocratic monarchy into a democratic republic, ruled under monarchical forms."

In the pages of Miss Burney's *Diary* this "little" King appears as a gentle, harmless, gay, fascinating person, eaten through and through with unconscious selfishness, surrounded by six lovely princesses, his daughters, worshipped by "the most sweet queen" Charlotte, flitting in and out of the palace rooms, through which he is soon to wander in desolate and irreparable madness, haranguing imaginary parliaments and addressing imaginary armies. History does not present a more pitiable or more tragic figure.

The preceding eulogies on Washington's abilities as a soldier, engineer, and tactician were rapidly realised in the following months. While he could not of course be everywhere, his far-seeing eye and indefatigable pen swept to every part of the long line, saw and met difficulties, swept away obstacles, provided for every emergency, anticipated as far as possible every movement of the enemy.

The first year of the Revolution had come and gone, the experimental stage had passed; great movements in Canada and the Carolinas had taken place, vacillating between success and failure. In Canada, Arnold and Montgomery after heroic marches, splendid attacks, and daring enterprises on the St. Lawrence, at Quebec and Montreal, had at last succumbed to Carleton and the regulars; Montgomery was killed, Arnold wounded; Canada had

to be evacuated, and the Americans retreated to Crown Point and Ticonderoga. Generals Schuyler and Gates were left in ambiguous relations as to the supreme command of the Northern army, and jealousies flamed forth anew.

In the South, on the other hand, fortune had attended General Lee, Colonel Moultrie, and Colonel Thompson in the defence of Charleston, when Sir Peter Parker, Sir Henry Clinton, and the English fleet had been gallantly repulsed, the fleet driven off to New York, and peace and quiet secured for the Carolinas for three years to come.

By the middle of August, 1776, the vicinity of New York swarmed with from twenty-five to thirty thousand British regulars and Hessians under the Howes, Earls Cornwallis and Percy, Clinton, Parker, De Heister (commander of the Hessians), and Grant, while the lower Bay and Hudson River presented a menacing picture of scores of great battle-ships, transports, sloops of war, floating batteries for the destruction of the city and its surroundings.

Had the British had one commander of striking ability at this stage of the war—one-tenth of a Marlborough, one-fiftieth of a Wellington—how different might have been the tale to tell! But run, for a moment, over the list of starred and gartered incompetence—Gage, the Howes, Burgoyne, Clinton, Parker, Carleton, Tarleton, Cornwallis, many of these men “parlour knights” armed with manifestoes, proclamations, honeyed words, rather than

with the sense of true right and justice; what else could be expected than—Yorktown?

The same blundering shortsightedness, which had characterised the Howes at Boston, now pursued them at New York. Thousands of splendid troops trained in the British regular army were at their command,—one might add, at their mercy; yet no effective steps were taken to sever the confederacy in twain, cut off New England from Pennsylvania and Virginia, and thus force the belligerents to sue for peace. The same gross inertia seized and possessed the foreigners at Philadelphia, when that city fell into their hands some months later; and though their approaching occupation of New York was to last more than seven long years, until the Revolution had been two years an accomplished fact, they never even handled the acquisition like intelligent beings, much less as the most significant conquest of the war. They held it indeed, but with what exhibitions of folly, with what ceaseless inactivity, what disregard of its strategic importance, what weakness and instability of purpose!

The operations around New York, in the autumn of 1776, were a signal illustration of Washington's ability, under the most harassing circumstances, in keeping the enemy at bay, in defending heroically a line huge, sinuous, indefensible at many points, in holding his own on the whole, and in wearing out a foe skilled in attack and overflowing with resources. New York and its environs were much too vast for him, with his slender resources, famished militia-

men, and rebellious soldiery, to retain or to defend; yet for months together he kept up the unequal struggle, with Howe's and Parker's and Dunmore's combined fleets anchored in the bay, thousands of regulars whitening Staten Island and Long Island with their tents and martial glitter, and every advantage of arms and accoutrements, known at this time, in possession of his antagonists. His irregular and undisciplined troops were overmastered in an engagement called the battle of Brooklyn Heights, in August; but he escaped with marvellous alertness—"the old fox" as they called him—across the deep river with his nine thousand men to New York, and there remained till he was in danger of being surrounded and entrapped by Howe's powerful forces. Then, mercifully abstaining from burning the city, he left it without confusion or disaster or overwhelming loss, and retired to King's Bridge, Harlem Plains, Fort Washington, and Fort Lee.

The results for the Americans were negative in one sense, and positive in another. The Highlands of the Hudson were seized and fortified; the battle of Harlem Plains favoured the Continental side, yet Fort Washington with its garrison of three thousand men fell into the hands of the enemy, and caused the evacuation of the surrounding country. One disaster seemed momentarily linked to another; hundreds deserted or went home on the American side: "they are a set of tatterdemalions," wrote a British officer; "there is hardly a whole pair of breeches in an entire regiment." Famine, small-

pox, camp fever, bleeding feet, hunger-bitten countenances, wild desire for plunder, uncontrollable homesickness were familiar spectacles in all the patriot camps. Towards the end of the year, General Lee, second in command to Washington, was disgracefully captured and carried off in slippers and dressing-gown—some think by premeditation—by a handful of regulars. The army dwindled at one time to three or four thousand men, and Cornwallis, thinking the war was over, prepared to return to England.

But just at this point, Fortune turned her wheel, and the Jersey campaign with its brilliant successes changed despair to bright expectation, and made the battles of Princeton and Trenton red-letter anniversaries in the history of American independence.

These engagements, with Washington's crossings of the ice-laden Delaware in December of this year, exemplified the quick and ceaseless watchfulness of the commander, whose activity was only matched by the inactivity of the foe. Finding it impossible, with his wretched little bands of hungering and often disaffected yeomanry, to pursue any but a defensive policy, he dealt many a sudden and disastrous blow at the invaders, decimated their ranks by capture, and so disheartened the Howes, that new offers of peace, and proclamations of pardon, and holding out of the now withered olive branch ensued. Franklin, John Adams, and Rutledge even met the British Commission, and much mild palaver about returning to their allegiance, unconditional



surrender, etc., passed ineffectually between the combatants.

No peace on such terms was practicable.

The year 1777 was memorable for many things, but for none more than for the humane and eloquent utterance of Lord Chatham who, when it was proposed to use the savages against America, spoke the words quoted below.

It was upon this memorable occasion that he made the famous reply to Lord Suffolk, who had said, in reference to employing the Indians, that, "we were justified in using all the means which God and nature had put into our hands." The circumstance of Lord Chatham having himself revised this speech is an inducement to insert it here in full:

"I am ashamed," exclaimed Lord Chatham, as he rose, "shocked to hear such principles confessed, to hear them avowed in this House or in this country; principles equally unconstitutional, inhuman, and unchristian.

"My Lords, I did not intend to have trespassed again on your attention, but I cannot repress my indignation. I feel myself impelled by every duty. My Lords, we are called upon as members of this House, as men, as Christian men, to protest against such notions, standing near the throne, polluting the ear of majesty. That God and nature put into our hands! — I know not what idea that Lord may entertain of God and nature, but I know that such abominable principles are equally abhorrent to religion and humanity. What! attribute the sacred sanction of God and nature

to the massacres of the Indian scalping-knife, to the cannibal savage, torturing, murdering, roasting, and eating; literally, my Lords, eating the mangled victims of his barbarous battles! Such horrible notions shock every precept of religion, divine and natural, and every generous feeling of humanity; and, my Lords, they shock every sentiment of honor; they shock me as a lover of honorable war, and a detester of murderous barbarity.

“These abominable principles, and this more abominable avowal of them, demand most decisive indignation.”<sup>1</sup>

Washington was earnestly in favour of a standing army of forty thousand men who should steadily train for battle, and take the place of the vacillating mob whose terms of enlistments were continually expiring, and whose insubordination, sectional jealousies, and disobedience kept him a continual prey to anxiety. So high an opinion did Congress have of his virtues and patriotism, that they appointed him military Dictator for six months, with full powers to do as he pleased in the conduct of the campaign. And never was confidence better placed, or in the end better justified.

The day after the battle of Trenton (Dec. 25th), in which a thousand Hessians were captured, their leader, Colonel Rales, mortally wounded, and the rest sent flying and frightened to Princeton, this honour was conferred without any knowledge of the victory just gained, at the very time, too, when

<sup>1</sup> Lord Brougham, *Essay on Chatham*, 1777, p. 38.

Horatio Gates and others were planning underhand assaults on the reputation of the commander. It is pathetically recorded that, at this time, as if frozen to insensibility by sufferings and a profound sense of responsibility, Washington was never seen to smile. Day and night he was pursued by the phantom of his dissolving army, sorrow over the evacuation of New York and the surrender of Fort Mifflin, apprehensions for the safety of Philadelphia, which the Congress had already abandoned for Lancaster, and intense sympathy with his naked and barefooted troops, barely six thousand of whom still clung feebly to him. His letters at this time are passionate and powerful outcries against the delays of Congress, the lack of patriotism in the provinces, the insufficiency of men and money; the thousand questions of camp-fire and bivouac, tossed irresistibly to and fro by his martyred soldiers as they froze in the icy December weather, unprotected by tents or blankets, shoeless, in rags, rise to the surface of these plain-spoken epistles, and reveal a state of things which amply explains this unsmiling time.

Delightful, therefore, was the radiant little gleam of happiness that came with Trenton, soon to broaden into beaming joy over the twin victory of Princeton, another of those sudden, Napoleonic moves which occasionally varied the compulsory "Fabian policy" of the Americans. To watch, to wait, to hold his own, to lose no gained advantage, to be ever on the *qui vive*, to pounce suddenly upon the dreaming foe, asleep at his Christmas revels, to

inflict a deadly blow and then retire unharmed to his leafy lair : such was the only safe course at this juncture for the American panther, fighting against fearful odds. To risk any more, to risk simply for the sake of risking, or to placate a civilian Congress a hundred miles away, yet continually interfering, would have brought infinite disaster, and soon closed the war.

The true Continental policy, therefore, was the one pursued—to wear the British out, to cripple their fleet by swarms of swift privateers, flying in and out every cove and inlet, to capture big and little bands of marauders in detail, to hem in, cut off, starve out if possible, to hang like wasps on flank and rear and sting to death man by man.

And the event, four years from now, proved the wisdom of this policy which, under the circumstances, was the only one practicable.

Small successes like these—small in one sense, large in another—filled the land with enthusiasm, checked the contagion of desertion, and again called forth the public thanks of Congress. With every advantage of men, money, artillery, and mercenaries, the invaders accomplished nothing; and Washington, profiting by their lethargy, went into winter quarters at Morristown, preparing to rest and recruit his forces for the summer campaign. The swiftness of his down-rush on Trenton and Princeton, the celerity and secrecy of his movements everywhere in upper Jersey, and his personal persuasiveness and popularity among the troops,

bespoke him a dangerous foe and vexed the very soul of Cornwallis and Lord Howe. Incredible as it may seem, nothing was done by either army until May, a most welcome rest for Washington, a most inexcusable loss of time for Howe. Washington lay vigilant in the hills, watching every movement of the enemy, cheered by the presence of his devoted wife, studying with his aides the new plan of campaign, writing volumes of dispatches to Congress, to the governors of the different States, to General Schuyler at Albany, to Benjamin Harrison, Richard Henry Lee, and other influential personal friends at Philadelphia, to friends and kinspeople in his beloved Virginia, letters frankly full of his hopes and fears.

The American Commission abroad had at length aroused the interest of France, and five thousand muskets and stores of ammunition arrived to cheer the Americans. Foreign officers began to flock to the shores of the New World, and entangle Congress in curious and annoying questions of rank, pay, appointments, and commissions. Many of these were noble and magnanimous souls—Kosciuszko, Pulaski, LaFayette, De Kalb, and, a little later, Steuben, De Grasse, and Rochambeau, are noble names for any nation to enroll in its legion of honour, but particularly so for America at this forlorn and often hopeless time. Seeds of freedom had been scattered broadcast all over Europe by Locke and “Junius,” Bolingbroke and Voltaire, John Wilkes and Jean Jacques Rousseau, and these

seeds had germinated plentifully in Poland, in Prussia, in France, and in England, bearing as their noble fruit the band of devoted patriots just enumerated.

“Freedom shrieked when Kosciuszko fell,” wrote the poet Campbell in a memorable line which has enbalméd the gallant Lithuanian who came over to help Washington, and survived the Revolution many years. Innumerable streets, public squares, towns, counties, and monuments perpetuate, in the United States, the name of the gentle and gracious marquis who, at twenty, leaves his beautiful wife and vast possessions to serve, to starve, finally to triumph, with Washington. Steuben, amid the horrors of Valley Forge and the rest of that nightmare winter, first taught the Americans what regular discipline was. To Americans, Poland is not only the land of great novelists and exquisite musicians, it is the land of Pulaski, who fell nobly fighting for American freedom; and, but for the timely aid of the countrymen of D’Estaing, De Grasse, and Rochambeau, American independence would probably never have been achieved.

As the long months of 1777 uncoiled themselves from the “loom of Time,” they gradually wove their substance into a fabric of mingled light and shade, of gloom and gladness, that soon became characteristic of the whole war. The beginning of the year was all light for the Americans. Then the long and much-needed hibernation at Morristown and Middlebrook ensued. Mid-summer revealed

alarming activity of Burgoyne, Riedesel, Breymann, and Carleton in the vicinity of Lake Champlain, where St. Clair was forced to abandon Ticonderoga, Arnold with his little fleet was swept from the water, and seven or eight thousand regulars, Hessians, Canadians, and Indians, with a huge train of artillery and abundant stores, were creeping cautiously towards Albany, to form if possible a junction with Howe and Clinton, and sweep the Hudson with a "besom of destruction."

The scheme was well planned, but it did not take into proper consideration two all-important factors: the treachery of the Indian allies, and the high spirit of the New York and New England yeomanry. The Indians were the wind in human form: one moment here, the next there; fickle, inconstant, destitute of patriotism or principle, vindictive as treacherous, a people of moods, all smiles or frowns according to circumstances, actuated by no governing thought save need or greed, or vengeance on the paleface, be he friend or foe, creatures of impulse and impression, totally unreliable in the great issues of life.

The credulous Burgoyne had hundreds of these uncertain allies in his pay, and, at the critical moment, they deserted him in the dark wood, and contributed to a catastrophe more fearful than that which, in far Virginia, had linked the name of the ill-fated Braddock inseparably with the first great American tragedy.

If the Indians were the wind incarnate, the yeo-

manry of this beautifully picturesque region of the Adirondacks, the Vermont and Berkshire Hills, and the Hudson and Mohawk valleys were a wall, but a moving wall here, there, and everywhere where danger or honour called, men actuated by the purest patriotism, the highest motives, the most unselfish devotion, living exemplifications of the fury that lies latent in the plough-boy, the hunter, the dweller in the lonely forest, the denizen of the river and the mountain, when his sweetness is turned to gall, his honey to vinegar, and his gay laugh to a sardonic grin under the nitric acid of just indignation.

The strategic blunder of Burgoyne was precisely in putting himself superciliously, in an unguarded moment, at the mercy of these twin elements. All seemed as beautiful as a summer dream to this fantastic captain—more skilled in scribbling tasteless plays than in commanding armies—as he started gaily forth down the lovely shores of Champlain, drums beating, banners flying, his flotilla cleaving the silver waters of the lake, all as bright and fanciful as a Venetian *fiesta*. Travellers know the delightful beauty of this region in midsummer—the shadowy woods, the crystal lakes sunk deep in the primeval forests, the dashing mountain streams, the lordly mountains themselves, with their splendid verdure of fir and beech and birch and exuberant fern,—each with its musical Indian name hanging like a tassel to it: now all peace and rich landscape beauty. But *then*—

Into this realm of elves and fairies, of goblins and



Indians, where every tree would soon change to a flame of cannon or a flash of flint-lock—into this region, dragging his heavy brass cannon, his long train of baggage waggons, his sappers and miners and pickets, the cavalcade even accompanied by ladies of rank, advanced the incautious invader, until as the months from July to October moved on, with now and then a brilliant small success, such as the recapture of this much-captured Ticonderoga, he reached the neighbourhood of Saratoga.

A Congressional cabal meanwhile had placed General Gates over the head of the gallant Schuyler, just as the fruits of Schuyler's long and patient toil were about to be gathered. Eleven thousand men had now assembled in the various American camps around Lake George, Stillwater, Saratoga, and Bemis's Heights. In August, a brigade of these led by the sturdy Stark fell on the British at Bennington, Vermont, and defeated them, crippling Burgoyne and causing a panic in his camp. It was one of those scares that cause people to "realise" things—a smart sense of danger, the perils of advancing too far from one's base into an enemy's country, the inadequacy of one's resources, the valour and determination of the foe. Bennington was an object-lesson just two months ahead of Saratoga, but it seems to have taught Burgoyne nothing. One thing especially he never "realised": that New England was not Pennsylvania or lower New York; loyalists were few and far between; every man was as true as steel, and the woods swarmed with keen-eyed

marksmen—men born to the gun, inured to hardship, full of zeal for the cause, whose hearts, once soft for the old country, had hardened into rock and were possessed with the fixed idea to be free. Entrapped, so to speak, in his own meshes, caught in a *cordon* of foes that could not bend or be broken, boastfully proclaiming that he would eat his Christmas dinner at Albany, this second *Miles Gloriosus* actually fulfilled his threat, and really ate the Christmas turkey among the “Mynheers” but as—a captive!

On the 17th of October, 1777,—almost the identical date to assume, four years hence, a world-wide celebrity at Yorktown,—the conqueror, distressed, bewildered, haggard with disappointed ambition, and, doubtless, heartily ashamed of himself for the part he had played, ingloriously capitulated—he, his officers and army of six thousand men, seven thousand stand of arms, great store of artillery and provisions, Hessians, Indians, and all, wiped at one fell blow from the face of the earth.

This splendid achievement was largely due to the heroic temper and exertions of Benedict Arnold and General Schuyler, two men grossly slighted by Congress, but distinguished by Washington with every mark of respect and consideration. Arnold began his career as a true patriot, filled with zeal for the cause, naturally gifted as a leader, imperious, high-strung, and indomitable: Montreal, Quebec, Lake Champlain were strewn with his achievements. He thirsted for glory but he also thirsted for official

recognition. This was systematically denied him, and his ardent nature, soured by repeated disappointments, by continual snubs, by the elevation of meaner men over his head, soured, darkened, grew embittered, at last drank of the poison cup of overpowering temptation—and fell.

The crown of his humiliation was complete when Gates deprived him of his commission, and ordered him off the field of Bemis's Heights, omitting his name entirely in the account of Burgoyne's surrender.

“Burgoyne and some of his principal officers met with a reception in the American camp which they little dreamed of. Gates behaved toward them with the utmost courtesy; but the generosity of Schuyler, who was present at the surrender, and whose property had been wickedly destroyed, equalled anything to be found in the annals of chivalry. The Baroness Riedesel, who has left, in her *Memoirs*, a most charming and graphic picture of the scenes in which she participated in this country, and particularly in this campaign, describes the treatment she received at his hands with great pathos. She says, that when she drew near the American tents, a good-looking man came towards her, helped her children from the calèche in which she rode, and kissed and caressed them, at the same time telling her not to be the least alarmed. Afterward, when all the generals were about to dine with Gates, the same gentleman, who she then heard was General Schuyler, came to her, and invited her to his own tent, that she might not be embarrassed in so large a company, she being the only lady among them. He entertained her

with many delicacies, and then gave her a cordial invitation to visit him at his house in Albany, where he expected Burgoyne would be his guest. She describes her reception there by Mrs. Schuyler and her daughters, as being like that of a friend instead of an enemy. 'They treated us,' she said, 'with the most marked attention and politeness, as they did General Burgoyne, who had caused General Schuyler's beautifully finished house to be burned. In fact, they behaved like persons of exalted minds, who determined to bury all recollections of their own injuries in the contemplation of our misfortunes.' General Burgoyne was struck with General Schuyler's generosity, and said to him: 'You show me great kindness, though I have done you much injury.'—'That was the fate of war,' replied the brave man, 'let us say no more about it.'

"General Schuyler was detained at Saratoga when Burgoyne and his suite departed for Albany. He wrote to his wife, requesting her to give the British general the best reception in her power. 'He sent an aid-de-camp to conduct me to Albany,' said Burgoyne, in a speech in the British House of Commons, 'in order, as he expressed it, to procure better quarters than a stranger might be able to find. That gentleman (Colonel Richard Varick) conducted me to a very elegant house, and, to my great surprise, presented me to Mrs. Schuyler and her family. In that house I remained during my whole stay in Albany, with a table of more than twenty covers for me and my friends, and every other demonstration of hospitality.'"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lossing, *Washington and the American Republic*, vol. ii, p. 537.



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While the pendulum swung thus high in the North, and began to mark October as the "most immemorial month" of American independence, it swung wofully low in the South where the Commander-in-chief, himself, found the army "a great chaos," as he wrote, from which he was trying to evolve some order. The hot months had started Burgoyne and Howe from their lairs almost simultaneously, and, like swarms of bees, their forces fastened on the extremities of the confederacy and threatened to extinguish it. Sir William Howe, baffling spies and scouts, appeared suddenly with two hundred sail off the Delaware capes. By September 1st, he had penetrated two hundred miles up Chesapeake Bay, and landed eighteen thousand troops near the Elk River. As this army headed towards Philadelphia, it was hung upon flank and rear by "Light Horse" Harry Lee, Generals Sullivan, Wayne, and Greene, and such few thousands of troops as were present from day to day. "Today I have a full army, tomorrow none," complained Washington. In little more than three weeks after landing at Elk River, Howe marched victoriously into Philadelphia (Sept. 26th), though momentarily checked at Brandywine, thirteen days before.

Brandywine, like Germantown, was one of those victorious defeats which taught the Americans so much, which evoked medals and thanks from Congress, lifted the Fabian policy into a science of negative possibilities, inspired in the British respect for their antagonists, and showed the folly of attempt-

ing to subdue millions of free people with twenty-five thousand regulars and a few thousand hireling Hessians. "There are 60,000 babes born every year in America and our commerce is worth 25,000,000 dollars annually," exclaimed Franklin, always seizing the practical side of things.

And the same philosopher, on hearing of Howe's entry into Philadelphia, wrote, "Philadelphia has taken Howe, not Howe Philadelphia."

Hannibal at Capua could not, indeed, have been more effectively taken than Howe in the peaceful Quaker City.

The British now had two costly bases a hundred miles apart, two vast military camps to guard and fortify, two fleets to maintain, a divided force and plan of campaign to carry out, the two most populous cities in the country to defend against a wily and untiring foe. The character of this foe was well described by LaFayette:

"Eleven thousand men but tolerably armed, and still worse clad, presented a singular spectacle; in this parti-colored and often naked state, the best dresses were hunting-shirts of brown linen. Their tactics were equally irregular. They were arranged without regard to size, excepting that the smallest men were in the front rank. With all this, these were good-looking soldiers, conducted by zealous officers."

Scarcely had the invaders settled down in the Tory city, for Philadelphia was substantially Tory at that time, and in the very act of drinking toasts



to King George and confusion to the Continental Congress over their brilliant success, when the loving-cup of congratulation was embittered by the news from Burgoyne. Thus the pendulum righted itself and swung up heavily in favour of the Americans.

The capture of Philadelphia seemed a great success, but the effect was as nothing compared with the capture of Burgoyne.

“The surrender of Burgoyne and his army was an event of infinite importance to the republican cause beyond its immediate results. Hitherto, during the war, the preponderance of successes had been on the side of the British; and there were doubtful minds and trembling hearts everywhere among the true friends of the cause, to whom the idea of deliverance of the colonists appeared almost chimerical.

“The events on the Brandywine were not calculated to inspire hope, even in the most hopeful; and all eyes were turned anxiously to the army of the North. Every breath of rumor from Saratoga was listened to with eagerness; and when the victory was certified, a shout of triumph went up all over the land—from the furrow, and workshops, and marts of commerce, from the pulpit, from provincial halls of legislation, from partisan camps, and from the shattered ranks of the commander-in-chief of the American armies, at White-marsh. The bills of Congress rose twenty per cent in value; capital came forth from its hiding-places; the militia of the country were inspirited, and more hopeful hearts everywhere prevailed.

“The Congress, overjoyed by the event, forgot their

own dignity; and when Major Wilkinson, Gates' bearer of despatches to that body, appeared at their door, he was admitted to the legislative floor, and allowed verbally to proclaim in the ear of that august assembly: 'The whole British army have laid down their arms at Saratoga; our own, full of vigor and courage, expect your orders; it is for your wisdom to decide where the country may still have need of their services.' In the ecstasy of the hour the commander-in-chief was overlooked and almost forgotten; and the insult of the elated Gates, in omitting to send his despatches to his chief, was allowed to pass unrebuked.

"Beyond the Atlantic the effect of this victory was also very important. In the British Parliament it gave strength to the opposition, and struck the ministerial party with dismay. 'You may swell every expense and every effort, still more extravagantly,' thundered Chatham, as he leaned upon his crutches and poured forth a torrent of eloquent invective and denunciation. 'You may pile and accumulate every assistance you can buy or borrow; traffic and barter with every little pitiful German prince that sells and sends his subjects to the shambles of a foreign power; your efforts are for ever vain and impotent; doubly so from this mercenary aid on which you rely, for it irritates to an incurable resentment the minds of your enemies. To overrun with the mercenary sons of rapine and plunder, devoting them and their possessions to the rapacity of hireling cruelty!' . . .

"By this victory, unaided as the republicans were by any foreign help or encouragement of much importance, their prowess was placed in the most favorable light before the eyes of continental Europe. France

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now listened with respect to the overtures for aid made by the American commissioners. Spain, the states-general of Holland, the prince of Orange, Catharine of Russia, and even Ganganelli (Pope Clement the Fourteenth), all of whom feared and hated England because of her increasing puissance in arms, commerce, and diplomacy, thought and spoke kindly of the struggling Americans. And on the sixth of February following, France acknowledged the independence of the United States, and entered into a treaty of friendship and commerce, and an alliance offensive and defensive, with them.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lossing, *Washington and the American Republic*, vol. ii, p. 539.

## CHAPTER XVI

### ON TO YORKTOWN

TWENTY-TWO miles northwest of Philadelphia lies a lovely and peaceful little valley, over which now the very spirit of tranquillity broods. The green hills on either side are embowered in luxuriant verdure; wreaths of delicate blue smoke curl heavenward from many an old-fashioned stone chimney; rich farms, ploughed and cultivated by a sturdy "Dutch" yeomanry, spread their orchards and their fields of grain in every direction; dairies and vegetable gardens vary the landscape with their quaint architecture and many-coloured expanses of green in every shade; picturesque country roads wind in and out the curves of the hills; rivulets and springs gladden the verdure with their presence, and the wild wood, full of birds and butterflies in the summer season, everywhere gives evidence of a civilisation two centuries and a half old.

This is one of the most memorable spots in the United States, the spot where, in the awful winter of 1778, the patriot army, eleven thousand strong, huddled together in winter quarters, and strove to keep soul and body together until spring should open and deliver them from a Dante's Inferno of ice and snow. Here they froze and starved, suffered and

died, martyred by alternate hopes and fears, almost within sound of the bells of Philadelphia where plenty reigned, bells which to them were more like death-bells than the symbols of God's mercy and loving-kindness to men.

Acres and acres of the slopes and hillsides, now so beautiful and calm with the peace of more than a hundred years, then lay thickly strewn with log cabins roofed with leaves and branches, cabins 12 by 14 feet, pointed with clay or mud, holding twelve soldiers each. Washington himself, lynx-eyed in everything that concerned the comfort of his army, issued the most minute directions for the construction of the huts, offered bounties for the best and speediest built, and on every occasion, wherever there was the least reason for it, composed and proclaimed encouraging bulletins to the soldiers, bidding them be of good cheer, acquit themselves like men, and cling tenaciously to their rights as members of free and independent States.

It seemed like the very Valley of the Shadow of Death, and the winter closed in over the American Army, sombre, ominous, and despairing.

"I am now convinced beyond a doubt," wrote Washington, "that, unless some great and capital change suddenly takes place in that line [the commissary's department], this army must inevitably be reduced to one or other of these three things: starve, dissolve, or disperse, in order to obtain subsistence in the best manner they can."

Two foreign observers, the Marquis de LaFayette

and Baron von Steuben, testify as follows of the army:

“The unfortunate soldiers were in want of everything; they had neither coats, hats, shirts, nor shoes; their feet and legs froze till they became black, and it was often necessary to amputate them. From want of money, they could neither obtain provisions nor any means of transport; the colonels were often reduced to two rations, and sometimes even to one. The army frequently remained whole days without provisions, and the patient endurance of both soldiers and officers was a miracle which each moment served to renew. But the sight of their misery prevented new engagements: it was almost impossible to levy recruits; it was easy to desert into the interior of the country.”<sup>1</sup>

Steuben says:

“The arms at Valley Forge were in a horrible condition, covered with rust, half of them without bayonets, many from which a single shot could not be fired. The pouches were quite as bad as the arms. A great many of the carbines, fowling-pieces, and rifles were to be seen in the same company. The description of the dress is most easily given. The men were literally naked, some of them in the fullest extent of the word. The officers who had coats, had them of every color and make. I saw officers, at a grand parade at Valley Forge, mounting guard in a sort of dressing-gown, made of an old blanket or woollen bed-cover. With regard to their military discipline, I may safely say no such thing existed.”

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs of LaFayette,*

It is these men, whose "incomparable patience" the Commander praises in warmest words, hearts of gold, able, each man, to reply as Joseph Reed when approached by the foreign Peace Commission with a bribe: "I am not worth purchasing, but such as I am King George has not money enough to buy me!"

Yet this inflexible patriotism was set in a surrounding of treachery, lukewarmness, and intrigue. "Ah these detestable Tories!" exclaims Elkanah Watson in his diary; and these were the molluscs rather than men who, in a land literally flowing with milk and honey, sat and smiled while the heroic camp at Valley Forge sat and starved. "Starve, dissolve or disperse," wrote Washington to Congress, must be the inevitable fate of the army, often destitute of food for days together, if a proper commissariat were not organised.

A burst of cheery radiance interrupted the gloom when, in May, with heartiest thanksgiving, the army celebrated the news of the treaty of alliance and commerce with France signed the February previous. The adventurer Lee, with his heart even then hatching treason, was exchanged for the captive British General Prescott, who, a few months before, had been captured and carried off in his night clothes from his Rhode Island quarters, in a manner almost identical with the capture of Lee. Received with the most affectionate warmth by Washington, Lee was put in command of the right wing of the army.

Of Washington at this time, a foreigner in the camp wrote :

“General Washington received the Baron [Steuben] with great cordiality, and to me he showed much condescending attention. I cannot describe the impression that the first sight of that great man made upon me. I could not keep my eyes from that imposing countenance—grave, yet not severe; affable, without familiarity. Its predominant expression was calm dignity, through which you could trace the strong feelings of the patriot, and discern the father as well as the commander of his soldiers. I have never seen a picture that represents him to me as I saw him at Valley Forge, and during the campaigns in which I had the honor to follow him. Perhaps that expression was beyond the skill of the painter; but while I live it will remain impressed on my memory. I had frequent opportunities of seeing him, as it was my duty to accompany the Baron when he dined with him, which was sometimes twice or thrice in the same week. We visited him also in the evening, when Mrs. Washington was at headquarters. We were in a manner domesticated in the family.”

The terrors of that winter were increased, for Washington, by the publication of spurious letters attributing treasonable sentiments to him, and by the machinations of the Conway Cabal to remove him from his high position.

Washington repudiated the letters, attributed to John Randolph, last royal Attorney-general of Virginia, with scorn, and the shameless intrigues of





THE SURRENDER OF YORKTOWN.  
From an old print.



Gates, Conway and the gang of adventurers about them, fell to the ground.

The Capuan luxury of Philadelphia indeed—or the monumental folly of a civilian ministry, three thousand miles away, in attempting to direct military movements in a land totally unfamiliar to them—proved too much for the British, and caused a dramatic turn of events on the 18th of June, 1778. On that day, the news first burst on the astonished camp at Valley Forge, that Sir Henry Clinton with ten thousand troops had slipped anchor, so to speak, crossed the Delaware with a huge train of waggons and artillery, and was scudding away in hot haste over the plains of Jersey in full retreat for New York.

Now, the happy traveller skims over the ninety odd miles between the two great cities in ninety minutes. Then, marching with all possible speed, it took the invaders from June 18th to June 30th to reach Sandy Hook and find themselves under the protection of the fleet in New York Harbour. On the way, ten days after they started, the British suffered a disastrous defeat at Monmouth Court House, where they were fiercely attacked by the Americans, and where the ambiguous conduct of Lee, in ordering the Americans without reason to retreat, strengthened the prevailing opinion that he was a traitor. The day was saved by the vigilance of Washington and his Generals Greene, Lord Stirling, LaFayette, and Cadwallader, who, perceiving the confusion, rallied the troops, flung them power-

fully against the enemy, and, by twilight of this famous Sunday, had the foe in swift retreat towards New York.

It was on this occasion that the Marquis La-Fayette reports the historic scene between Washington and Lee:

“The conviction that Lee was a TRAITOR, and that this retreat was the first bitter fruit of his treason, now flashed upon the mind of Washington. Already the belief that he was untrue, and a dangerous man in the army, had been forced upon the consideration of many officers; but, until the previous evening, the generous heart of the commander-in-chief would not harbor such a suspicion. Late at night, the Reverend David Griffiths, a Welshman, and chaplain of the third Virginia regiment, had repaired to headquarters, and warned the chief, in presence of Hamilton, Harrison, and Fitzgerald, not to employ General Lee in commanding the advance on the ensuing morning. Washington received the warning doubtingly; when the reverend gentleman, on retiring, observed, ‘I am not permitted to say more at present, but your excellency will remember my warning voice to-morrow, in the battle.’

“Now that warning voice, Lee’s opposition to attacking Clinton at all, and his changefulness respecting the command of the advance, all combined to make Washington feel that Lee had ordered this retreat for the purpose of marring his plans, and disgracing him by the loss of a battle, so as to fulfil the traitor’s own predictions of its failure. It was under this impression, acting upon a most intense nature, that Washington,

as he was pushing forward, after ordering the flying officers to form their corps in his rear, met Lee. The chief was terribly exasperated, and, riding up to Lee, he exclaimed, in a tone of absolute fierceness, 'What is the meaning of all this, sir?' Lee hesitated for a moment; when Washington, with furious aspect and more furious words, again demanded, 'Sir, I desire to know what is the reason of all this disorder and confusion?'

"The fiery Lee, stung more by Washington's manner than his words, made an angry reply; when the enraged chief, no longer able to control his feelings, called him a 'damned poltroon.' Other bitter words passed quickly between the two generals; and, during that brief interview, the ardent Hamilton, who also remembered the chaplain's warning, drew his sword, and exclaimed: 'Your excellency and this army are betrayed; and the moment has arrived when every true friend of America and her cause must be ready to die in their defence!'

"But there was no time for altercation. The enemy, in pursuit of the fugitives, were advancing in full force. Wheeling his horse, Washington hastened to the rear, rallied a large portion of the broken regiments, and, by the well-directed fire of some fieldpieces which he had ordered to be placed in battery upon an eminence, the British were checked. Washington's presence inspired the troops with courage, and order was soon brought out of confusion.

"Having made all arrangements with great precision and despatch, the commander-in-chief rode back to Lee in a calmer state of mind, and, pointing to the rallied troops, inquired, 'Will you, sir, command in

that place?' 'I will!' eagerly exclaimed Lee. 'Then,' said Washington, 'I expect you to check the enemy immediately.' 'Your command shall be obeyed,' responded Lee, 'and I will not be the first to leave the field.'

"Back to the main army Washington now hurried, and with wonderful despatch formed the battalions in order for action, upon the eminences westward of a small morass which lay between them and the enemy. Lord Stirling was placed in command of the left wing, and General Greene took position on his right. Sharp fighting soon occurred. Lee's troops, exhausted by fatigue and the intense heat, were ordered to take position in the rear, near Englishtown, and their commander was directed to assemble the scattered fugitives there.

"The battle soon became general, and the British sustained a great loss in the death of Colonel Monckton. He was killed while leading his grenadiers against Wayne, who, with some artillery, had taken a strong position. His columns, terribly shattered at the same time, recoiled. The entire British line soon gave way, and the conflict ceased."<sup>1</sup>

Later, Lee was court-martialed and sentenced to suspension from the army for one year.

General Arnold entered Philadelphia with a force of Americans, and once again the cause loomed up into light and cheerfulness, "obfuscated," as Lee expressed it, by the fall of Savannah in the South towards the end of December.

<sup>1</sup> Lossing, *Washington and the American Republic*, vol. ii, p. 623.

Congress at once moved back to the wealthy Quaker City, where immediately the busy pens of the idlers begin to ply, diaries are kept, and pen-pictures of the men and times are abundantly painted. Here is Thacher's portrait of Washington :

“The personal appearance of our Commander in Chief, is that of the perfect gentleman and accomplished warrior. He is remarkably tall, full six feet, erect and well proportioned. The strength and proportion of his joints and muscles, appear to be commensurate with the pre-eminent powers of his mind. The serenity of his countenance, and majestic gracefulness of his deportment, impart a strong impression of that dignity and grandeur, which are his peculiar characteristics, and no one can stand in his presence without feeling the ascendancy of his mind, and associating with his countenance the idea of wisdom, philanthropy, magnanimity, and patriotism. There is a fine symmetry in the features of his face indicative of a benign and dignified spirit. His nose is straight and his eyes inclined to blue. He wears his hair in a becoming cue, and from his forehead it is turned back and powdered in a manner which adds to the military air of his appearance. He displays a native gravity, but devoid of all appearance of ostentation. His uniform dress is a blue coat, with two brilliant epaulettes, buff colored under clothes, and a three cornered hat with a black cockade. He is constantly equipped with an elegant small sword, boots and spurs, in readiness to mount his noble charger.”

The condition of the currency rendered the men of 1778-1779 almost desperate. In May of the lat-

ter year, 100 specie dollars were worth 1215 paper dollars: "a wagon-load of money will scarcely purchase a wagon-load of provisions," wrote an eminent observer. The General confided in Benjamin Harrison as follows:

"If I was to be called upon to draw a picture of the times and of Men, from what I have seen, and heard, and in part know, I should in one word say that idleness, dissipation and extravagance seems to have laid fast hold of most of them.—That speculation—peculation—and an insatiable thirst for riches seems to have got the better of every other consideration and almost of every order of Men.—That party disputes and personal quarrels are the great business of the day whilst the momentous concerns of an empire—a great and accumulated debt—ruined finances—dépreciated money—and want of credit (which in their consequences is the want of everything) are but secondary considerations and postponed from day to day—from week to week as if our affairs wear the most promising aspect—after drawing this picture, which from my Soul I believe to be a true one, I need not repeat to you that I am alarmed and wish to see my Countrymen roused."

The endless circling around New York and Philadelphia strikes almost a humorous chord in the heart of the leader at this time, when he writes to General Nelson:

"It is not a little pleasing, nor less wonderful to contemplate, that after two years' manœuvring and undergoing the strangest vicissitudes, that perhaps



ever attended any one contest since the creation, both armies are brought back to the very point they set out from, and that which was the offending party in the beginning is now reduced to the use of the spade and pickaxe for defence."

But the situation on the whole, when the army went into winter quarters at Middlebrook and Elizabethtown (1779), was rather encouraging than otherwise.

Called to Philadelphia to confer with Congress and its War Commission, on plans of campaign for the ensuing spring and summer, Washington, so far from being found the solemn and unapproachable chief, is present now and then at balls and festivities given in his honour, casts off care, dances three hours hand-running with the wife of General Greene, and joins willingly in the entertainments offered to M. Gérard, the French envoy, and other distinguished foreigners.

General Knox, in a letter of February 28th, wrote to his brother :

"We had at the Park (of artillery) on the 18th a most genteel entertainment given by self and officers. Everybody allows it to be the first of the kind ever exhibited in this State at least. We had above seventy ladies, all of the first *ton* in the State, and between three and four hundred gentlemen. We danced all night—an elegant room, the illuminating, fireworks, etc., were more than pretty. It was to celebrate the alliance between France and America."

Franklin's daughter writes to her father :

"I have lately been several times invited abroad with the General and Mrs. Washington. He always inquires after you in the most affectionate manner, and speaks of you highly. We danced at Mrs. Powell's your birth-day [January 6, (O. S.) 1706], or night I should say, in company together, and he told me it was the anniversary of his marriage [January 6, (N. S.) 1759] ; it was just twenty years that night."

The Hudson Highlands, White Plains, West Point, and other defensible spots on the route were eagerly inspected by the General and his engineers, and eligible points were rapidly selected for fortifications. The feeble operations of the French fleet under an incompetent leader, its dispersion by a storm at Newport, and its inability to get into New York Harbour with its eighteen ships and four thousand men, disappointed the general expectation in the efficiency of French aid at this time, and caused distrust and fear.

But the months of 1779, wonderfully mild as contrasted with those of 1778, slipped away favourably for the patriots: they were filled with guerilla skirmishes, feints on the part of Lord Howe's fleet at New York, and inconsequent manœuvres here and there on the Hudson on the part of both armies.

Time wore on.

A war of outrage now began to be waged against defenceless towns and villages in Virginia, Rhode Island, and Connecticut; churches, school-houses, undefended homes of women and children were scathed

by fire, and a deep and incurable resentment burned in the blood of the patriots as they heard of these outrages, far away in the distant camps.

To add to the horrors of this moment, the Indians of the Six Nations and of the Mingo and Ohio tribes began a series of atrocities which Campbell, in his *Gertrude of Wyoming*, has immortalised in most musical verse. Worn out with these massacres, Washington despatched General Sullivan with sixteen hundred men against the Iroquois, and the fair waters of the Susquehanna and the lovely vale of the Genesee soon bespoke his avenging arm.

The year 1780 opened with the Americans in winter quarters, partly at West Point, partly at Morristown, New Jersey, where cruel sufferings, in consequence of deep snows and a lack of bread and meat, reduced the riotous soldiers almost to rebellion.

The new French Minister, M. Luzerne (who had succeeded M. Gérard), wrote to the Count de Vergennes :

“I have had many conversations with General Washington, some of which have continued for three hours. It is impossible for me briefly to communicate the fund of intelligence, which I have derived from him, but I shall do it in my letters as occasions shall present themselves. I will now say only, that I have formed as high an opinion of the powers of his mind, his moderation, his patriotism, and his virtues, as I had before from common report conceived of his military talents and of the incalculable services he has rendered to his country.”

A stream of light came over sea with the Marquis de LaFayette who, after a considerable absence abroad, now returned with the joyful intelligence that Count Rochambeau, with a large French fleet and six thousand men, were about to arrive at Newport in aid of the Americans.

The puzzling purpose of the British became manifest towards the end of the year when, falling into another of those strange blunders so characteristic of this war, they resolved on a Southern campaign, hundreds of miles away from their permanent base at New York, and sent 7500 men under Admiral Arbuthnot, Sir Henry Clinton, and Lord Cornwallis, in December, 1779, and April, 1780, to capture Charleston.

Naturally, this poor little town fell into the power of the large attacking force: General Lincoln surrendered it; but it proved one of those ambiguous gifts of which the War for Independence reveals many: the possession of it simply beguiled the foe into the conceit that a deadly blow had been inflicted, and that the dragon had been cut in two. Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Savannah, Charleston, successively suffered decapitation at the hands of the invader—and yet the hydra was as many-headed as ever!

In fact, the fate of the two Indies is the most marvellous object-lesson in all English history. The Empire of the East, sovereign in its contempt for the West, rigid in its forms, rotten in civilisation, enervated to the last degree by fantastic forms of

luxury, fell an easy prey to the powerful East India Company which, in 1600, began its singular career there, to end with the sensational presence and exploits of Lord Clive and Warren Hastings. The gorgeous fabric of Indian monarchy crumbled at a touch—"such stuff as dreams are made on"—and its endless millions bowed almost thankfully beneath an alien yoke.

The miniature Empire of the West, on the other hand, was peopled by England's own children, bone of her bone and blood of her blood: a handful of hardy Anglo-Saxons whose temper and training were the same as those of the invader, but a temper and training instinct with force and pride, invincible in character, intelligent beyond the conception of contemporaries, filled with a conscience that burnt like a flame, and directed by a purpose to do or die in the cause of right.

England did not know her own children, or she would never have ventured on this war.

The weakness of Congress as a federal body, however, caused Washington many an anxious moment: the danger of disintegration was all the time imminent, and he wrote urgent letters on the subject.

In a letter to Fielding Lewis he says:

"I give it decisively as my opinion—that unless the States will content themselves with a full and well-chosen representation in Congress and vest that body with absolute powers in all matters relative to the great purposes of war, and of general concern (by which the States unitedly are affected, reserving to

themselves all matters of local and internal polity for the regulation of order and good government) we are attempting an impossibility, and very soon shall become (if it is not already the case) a many-headed monster—a heterogeneous mass—that never will or can steer to the same point.”

His “skeleton of an army,” as he called it, hung on the hills of Morristown and West Point and managed, somehow, to hold body and soul together until the fields blossomed afresh, and new life was infused into the fainting troops.

The bright hopes of the year, incident to the arrival of the French at Newport, were darkened by one spot of the blackest treachery—the treason of Benedict Arnold.

This officer, physically the bravest of the brave, beloved of Washington, ambitious yet ill-balanced, had risen by steady promotion, often interrupted by envy and intrigue, from the lowest to the highest, and when Howe evacuated Philadelphia, became military governor of the city. Ensconced in the handsome mansion of William Penn, he was courted, admired, fêted, feared, and soon began to exhibit the ostentation and evil of his nature. Marrying at forty the lovely and accomplished loyalist, Mary Shippen (his second wife), Arnold began a career of extravagance which plunged him into debt and into evil practices: he was accused, tried, and court-martialed, being condemned to receive a reprimand from his chief. This reprimand, nobly expressed, was as follows:



WASHINGTON AT TRENTON, JANUARY 2, 1777.

From the engraving by Daggett after the original painting by Colonel Trumbull





“Our profession is the chastest of all. Even the shadow of a fault tarnishes the lustre of our finest achievements. The least inadvertence may rob us of the public favor, so hard to be acquired. I reprimand you for having forgotten that, in proportion as you had rendered yourself formidable to your enemies, you should have been guarded and temperate in your deportment toward your fellow-citizens. Exhibit anew those noble qualities which have placed you on the list of our most valued commanders. I will furnish you, as far as it may be in my power, with opportunities of regaining the esteem of your country.”

Proud as Lucifer, Arnold was stung to the quick: “revenge, avarice, debt,” writes a well-known specialist, were the key-notes of his career; “money was his God,” exclaimed a contemporary, who knew him well. A tragic thought took possession of his mind and heart, and burnt there till it consumed his whole finer nature.

Mrs. Arnold had kept up correspondence with a handsome and gallant young officer, named André, who, during the British occupation of Philadelphia, had been prominent in social matters there, and had made himself a favourite by his noble and winning manners.

Through him, Arnold fell into treacherous correspondence with Howe, and securing from Washington command of the American fortifications at West Point, promised to deliver them over to the British General for fifteen thousand dollars, and the rank of brigadier-general in the English Army.

The following brief note, from his Orderly Book, reveals Washington's position in the tragedy:

"At the 'Robinson House.'

"I arrived here yesterday, on my return from an interview with the French general and admiral, and have been witness to a scene of treason, as shocking as it was unexpected. General Arnold, from every circumstance, had entered into a plot for sacrificing West Point. He had an interview with Major André, the British adjutant-general, last week at Joshua H. Smith's where the plan was concerted. By an extraordinary concurrence of incidents André was taken while on his return, with several papers in Arnold's hand-writing, that proved the treason. The latter unluckily got notice of it before I did, went immediately down the river, got on board the *Vulture*, which brought up André, and proceeded to New York."

The papers incriminating Arnold were found in the boot of Major André who, under the name of "Anderson," was captured by three Americans as he travelled, late in September, from West Point to New York, on his way to announce Arnold's intention of delivering up the fortress. Almost at the moment of the treachery, the Commander-in-chief unexpectedly reached West Point without a suspicion of the plot; but Arnold, leaving his distressed wife in a swoon, had already escaped to the British ship *Vulture* lying down the river, and reached New York in safety.

Major André, so full of talents, learning, and

accomplishments, adjutant-general in his own army, daring as a soldier well could be, high-minded as the noble American, Nathan Hale (who suffered the same death a few months before), was gibbeted as a spy, Oct. 2, 1780, yet, nevertheless, held in equal honour by both nations.

Tarrytown and Westminster Abbey record his career in eloquent monuments to his memory.

Arnold's obscure and pathetic death in London, 1801, calling on his attendants to array him in his uniform as an American General, and throw over him the American flag,—an end pregnant with passion and remorse,—fitly closes the sorrowful drama of his life.

And this treachery was committed against a bosom friend, of whom the Marquis de Chastellux wrote about this time:

“It is not my intention to exaggerate. I wish only to express the impression General Washington has left on my mind; the idea of a perfect whole, that cannot be the produce of enthusiasm, which rather would reject it, since the effect of proportion is to diminish the idea of greatness. Brave without temerity, laborious without ambition, generous without prodigality, noble without pride, virtuous without severity; he seems always to have confined himself within those limits, where the virtues, by cloathing themselves in more lively, but more changeable and doubtful colours, may be mistaken for faults. *This is the seventh year that he has commanded the army, and that he has obeyed Congress; more need not be*

*said, especially in America, where they know how to appreciate all the merit contained in this simple fact.* Let it be repeated that Condé was intrepid, Turenne prudent, Eugène adroit, Catinat disinterested. It is not thus that Washington will be characterized. It will be said of him, *at the end of a long civil war, he had nothing with which he could reproach himself.* . . . In speaking of this perfect whole of which General Washington furnishes the idea, I have not excluded exterior form. His stature is noble and lofty, he is well made, and exactly proportioned; his physiognomy mild and agreeable, but such as to render it impossible to speak particularly of any of his features, so that in quitting him, you have only the recollection of a fine face."

Thacher, in his Military Journal, says of the execution of André:

"October 2d.—Major André is no more among the living. I have just witnessed his exit. It was a tragical scene of the deepest interest. During his confinement and trial, he exhibited those proud and elevated sensibilities which designate greatness and dignity of mind. Not a murmur or a sigh ever escaped him, and the civilities and attentions bestowed on him were politely acknowledged. . . . The fatal hour having arrived, a large detachment of troops was paraded, and an immense concourse of people assembled; almost all our general and field officers, excepting his Excellency and his staff, were present on horseback; melancholy and gloom pervaded all ranks, and the scene was affectingly awful."

When such noble spirits as Greene, LaFayette,

Steuben, and eleven others of the highest integrity, pronounced the judgment of death as a spy on André, there could be no doubt of his technical guilt.

While these clouds were hovering so darkly over the Hudson, and Washington's heart was wrung with exquisite sorrow over the downfall of Arnold, affairs in the South were assuming a more promising aspect,—were indeed shaping themselves towards Yorktown. The unfortunate Lincoln had cooped himself up in Charleston, only to fall into the hands of an overwhelming enemy,—a mistake exactly paralleled, fourteen months later, on the waters of the muddy York, by Cornwallis himself.

By an act of singular imprudence, Congress had erected an independent department in the Carolinas and Georgia, and had given the command of it to the heedless and headless Gates, still dazzling its purblind eyes with the glamour of the Burgoyne disaster. With this disaster, Gates had infinitely less to do than Arnold, Schuyler, or the heroic Morgan, whom the British commander complimented, says Lodge, with having the finest regiment of riflemen in the world.

But Congress thought otherwise: Morgan, shamefully mistreated, had gone sulking to his Virginia plantation; Arnold, treated in the same way, had turned traitor; and Gates—became the “hero” of a crushing defeat by Cornwallis, at Camden, in August, 1781, not even knowing how many men he had in his own army.

This rival of Washington was of the calibre of

those omniscient Gauls who, in 1870-71, marched gaily with *mitrailleuses* and *chassepots* straight into the mouth of German "Krupps," without ever inquiring the road "à Berlin."

Three weeks after the fall of Charleston, Sir Henry Clinton wrote home to the Ministry:

"‘I may venture to assert that there are few men in South Carolina who are not either our prisoners or in arms with us.’ The assertion was not extravagant, for the State seemed to lie prostrate at the foot of its conqueror. Yet, although the native loyalists were numerous and active, the submission of the mass of the people was more apparent than real. Many of them, stunned by the surrender of the capital, and well aware that the only American army in the State had ceased to exist, were ready to yield and accept British rule in silence. If they had been properly and judiciously dealt with, they could have easily been kept quiet; and if not loyal, they would at least have been neutral. But the policy of the British Commanders made this impossible. To the people of South Carolina, brave, high-spirited and proud, they offered only the choice between death, confiscation, and ruin on the one side, and active service in the British army on the other. Thus forced to the wall, the South Carolinian who was not a convinced loyalist quickly determined that, if he must fight for his life in any event, he would do his fighting on the side of his country. Major James, for example, went into Georgetown to offer, in behalf of himself and his neighbors, to remain neutral. The usual choice was brutally offered him by the Captain in command. James re-

plied that he could not accept such conditions; and the gallant captain thereupon said that James was a 'damned rebel,' and that he would have him hanged. Then, with a chair, James knocked down the representative of Great Britain, left him senseless, and went off with his four brothers to take up arms against England and fight her to the death. In one form or another, barring perhaps the little incident of the chair, James and his brothers were typical. The people began to rise in all directions, take their arms and withdraw to the woods and swamps, thence to wage a relentless, if desultory, warfare against their invaders."<sup>1</sup>

As to Gates:

"Either an abounding charity or a love of paradox has tempted some recent writers to say that Gates has been too harshly judged, but it is difficult to discover any error he could have committed which he did not commit. He came down to form an army, where none existed, around a nucleus of regular troops, not to take command of one already organized. He should not have fought until he had made his army, disciplined it, marched and manœuvred with it, and tested it in some small actions. Instead of doing this he took the Continentals and marched straight for the main British army, picking up reinforcements of untried, undisciplined militia on the way. Arriving within striking distance of the enemy, he actually did not know how many men he had, and sent off eight hundred of his best troops, the only militia apparently who had seen fighting. When he stumbled upon the enemy he

<sup>1</sup> Lodge, *The Story of the Revolution*, p. 367.

put his poorest troops in front, without, apparently, direction or support, and first of all the militia who had been with him only twenty-four hours. Colonel Stevens of Virginia, a brave man, said that the rout was due to the 'damned cowardly behavior of the militia,' and as he commanded one division of them he probably knew what he was saying. But to lay the fault on the militia is begging the question. The unsteadiness of perfectly green troops in the field is well known, and these men ought not to have been brought into action against regulars at all at that moment—least of all should they have been put in the van to resist the onset of seasoned veterans without instructions or apparent support. The defeat of Camden was due to bad generalship, and resulted in the complete dispersion of the militia, and the sacrifice and slaughter of the hard-fighting Continentals. Sumter even was carried down in the wreck. He had cut off the convoy and baggage with perfect success, but the victory at Camden set the British free to pursue him. He eluded Cornwallis, but, encumbered and delayed by his prize, he was overtaken and surprised by Tarleton. Half his force was killed, wounded, or made prisoners; the rest were scattered, and it is said that Sumter, a few days later, rode into Charlotte alone, without a saddle and hatless, to begin all over again the work of forming a regiment, which he performed as usual with great energy and success.”<sup>1</sup>

In fact, there was a singular parallelism between the causes which led to Burgoyne's disaster at Saratoga, and the causes which led Cornwallis into the

<sup>1</sup> Lodge, *The Story of the Revolution*, p. 378.





THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE.  
From a French print, 1781.



trap at Yorktown. The Carolinas, like Western New York and the Canadian frontier, were full of disloyal men who vacillated, clung alternately to the one side or the other, trimmed their sails to every breeze, and made up a population of Laodiceans never really hot for anything. Vast woods extended everywhere; great rivers cleft the forests here and there; swamps and morasses, jungles of cane and dwarf palmetto, tangles of vine and lush vegetation hid a lurking foe when shelter was needed; mountains covered with luxuriant Southern growths towered toward the West; and back and best of all, their woods and mountains grew one striking crop: a clan of half-wild, half-civilised, wholly true-hearted men—"the Rough Riders of the Revolution"—who, springing up as if by magic, precisely like the splendid yeomanry of New England round Lake Champlain, gathered in a web about Ferguson, Rawdon, Tarleton, and Cornwallis, harrassed, entangled, finally crushed them.

Of these men Lodge finely says:

"They gathered in an open grove, and, leaning on their rifles, these backwoodsmen and wild Indian fighters bowed their heads and listened in silence to the preacher who blessed them and called upon them to do battle and smite the foe with the sword of the Lord and Gideon.

"Then they set out, a strange-looking army, clad in buckskin shirts and fringed leggings, without a tent, a bayonet or any baggage, and with hardly a sword among the officers. But every man had a rifle,

a knife, and a tomahawk, and they were all mounted on wiry horses. Discipline in the usual military sense was unknown, and yet they were no ordinary militia. Every man was a fighter, bred in Indian wars, who had passed his life with horse and rifle, encompassed by perils. They were a formidable body of men—hardy, bold to recklessness, and swift of movement. They pushed on rapidly over the high tableland covered with snow, and then down the ravines and gorges—rough riding, where there was hardly a trail—until, on the 29th, they reached the pleasant open lowlands near the North Forks of the Catawba.”<sup>1</sup>

The mettle of such men under such commanders as Greene (appointed to supersede Gates), Marion, Sumter, Steuben, “Light Horse” Harry Lee, Sevier, Shelby, Campbell, and William Washington, soon showed itself at King’s Mountain (Oct. 8th) and Cowpens (January 17, 1781), where Campbell, Morgan, and their “Back Water” mountaineers inflicted deadly blows on Ferguson and Tarleton, all but annihilating the flower of two of Cornwallis’s armies.

When it came to a drawn battle at Guilford Court House between Cornwallis and Greene, Greene to the outward eye was defeated, but it was one of those defeats which shatter victorious armies and lead to unforeseen consequences. The barbarities of Tarleton in hanging, burning, and plundering indiscriminately, now roused the fury of even so-called “loyalists”: the whole South rose as one

<sup>1</sup> Lodge, *The Story of the Revolution*, p. 382.

man, threw sympathy to the winds, and multiplied their favourite guerrilla warfare into a tormenting and, finally, intolerable vexation to the British. Cornwallis recoiled, shrivelled up, fled before it as before swarms of poisonous mosquitoes whose sting was death, and who never left off their torment day or night.

The South had had more than three years' rest, since the gallant Moultrie had repulsed the British fleet off Charleston; and now, full of fresh force and energy, it sprang elastically to the front, in aid of the plans of Washington and Greene, to rid the land of the invader. The multitude of generals, colonels, and majors, bred by the Revolutionary War, was a direct exemplification of the saying that, at that time, "in the knapsack of every private lay hidden the bâton of a marshal." It was the era of self-made, self-taught, self-trained men whose latent abilities, nourished by every possible opportunity, burst brightly forth in the glow and friction of the times, and swept them forcefully to the front.

Of such men the Southern army was full, from those "swamp foxes" of the Revolution, Marion, Sumter, and Lee, to the bold mountain colonels who surrounded and slew Ferguson at King's Mountain, and made a real slaughter-pen for Tarleton at Cowpens.

When Greene, the Fabius of the South, exactly trained in the tactics of Washington, threw himself with such men like a wedge between Cornwallis and Lord Rawdon, the end was not far to see. Even the

“creeping paralysis and dry rot” that overspread Congress, and benumbed its members at this moment, could not seriously impede the catastrophe to which all things, thanks to the mighty help of France, were now tending as surely as in some great tragedy of *Æschylus* or *Corneille*. “Sea power and money,” cried Washington, “are absolutely necessary to our success”; and both came in the very nick of time, when America had forgotten the very gleam of gold in these rotten paper times. The hard cash and hard common sense of Robert Morris and Benjamin Franklin wrought a wondrous change in the time; the former by constant loans on his personal credit, the latter by an advance of 6,000,000 livres (\$1,800,000) from France, nearly half of which arrived at this critical moment, when even Washington thought affairs more desperate than in the days of Valley Forge. A fine French fleet with three thousand men lay at Newport under De Barras and Count de Rochambeau, ready to co-operate with Washington.

In June, the allied armies began to co-operate, sweep swiftly and silently around New York, and, on receipt of an all-important note from Count de Grasse stating that he had left the West Indies for Chesapeake Bay, start under LaFayette and Washington for Virginia, three hundred miles away.

Cornwallis now either had to follow the manoeuvring Greene deep down in the Carolinas, and abandon Virginia, or he had to wheel, march swiftly from Wilmington, join Arnold in the Old Domin-

ion, and sweep that commonwealth with fire and sword. Drawn to his doom by a strange magnetism, he chose the Virginia campaign.

Singularly spared the horrors of war since Dunmore had disappeared, "the most antient and loyal colony of Virginia," rich and prosperous, had been one of the granaries of the Revolutionary Army. Strangely enough, when a British gunboat sailed up the Potomac, and was supplied with provisions by the timid overseer, Lund Washington, Mount Vernon escaped destruction, with this historic rebuke from the General to his kinsman :

"At New Windsor, Monday, April 30.

"I am very sorry of your loss. I am a little sorry to hear of my own; but that which gives me most concern is, that you should go on board the enemy's vessels, and furnish them with refreshments. It would have been a less painful circumstance to me to have heard, that in consequence of your non-compliance with their request, they had burnt my house and laid the plantation in ruins. You ought to have considered yourself as my representative, and should have reflected on the bad example of communicating with the enemy, and making a voluntary offer of refreshments to them with a view to prevent a conflagration."

Here, where British rule in America had begun, British rule in America was to end for ever.

The minor incidents of Tarleton's raid on Charlottesville, when Jefferson, then Governor, and the Legislature narrowly escaped capture, of Arnold's burning of Richmond, and his transfer to other

scenes of butchery and plunder in Connecticut, and of the occupation of Williamsburg and the lower James, may be passed over, in view of the great fact that on August 1st, Cornwallis reached Yorktown. August 9th, he had strongly intrenched himself there in apparently impregnable fortifications, and was waiting for the British fleet to attack and disperse the ships of De Grasse, already whitening the Chesapeake.

One precious glimpse at Mount Vernon, the first in many years, and Washington was off for Williamsburg and Yorktown, accompanied by his brave generals and sixteen thousand troops thirsting for their game.

It was an intensely anxious moment.

Jealousies had arisen between the French admirals: De Grasse, having already engaged Arbuthnot and Rodney in several indecisive naval fights, was restive, reluctant, insistent on leaving. Yielding to Washington's supplications, he at last promised to remain until November 1st. Pushing his operations with almost frenzied speed, the American General, zealously aided by LaFayette and Alexander Hamilton and the French contingent, strongly invested the British positions, which were most scientifically chosen for capture. Washington himself fired the first gun, and from that moment till the 17th of October, the flash and roar of siege guns, brass cannon, and musketry were incessant.

On the 17th, Cornwallis called a parley. On the 18th, the articles of capitulation were signed. On



the 19th, from eight thousand to nine thousand royal troops, nine hundred sailors, many ships, transports, and barges surrendered, the troops to General Lincoln, on behalf of the Americans, the ships and sailors to Count De Grasse. Cornwallis, feigning illness, sent his sword to Washington by General O'Hara. To the tune of "The World Turned Upside Down" the brave British troops, who had fought so gallantly all through this trying campaign, marched through the serried ranks of Americans and French and stacked their arms.

Of the closing scene an eye-witness wrote:

"At about twelve o'clock, the combined army was arranged and drawn up in two lines extending more than a mile in length. The Americans were drawn up in a line on the right side of the road, and the French occupied the left. At the head of the former the great American commander, mounted on his noble courser, took his station, attended by his aides. At the head of the latter was posted the excellent Count Rochambeau and his suite. . . . It was about two o'clock when the captive army advanced through the line formed for their reception. Every eye was prepared to gaze on Lord Cornwallis, the object of peculiar interest and solicitude; but he disappointed our anxious expectations; pretending indisposition, he made General O'Hara his substitute as the leader of his army. This officer was followed by the conquered troops in a slow and solemn step, with shouldered arms, colors cased and drums beating a British march. Having arrived at the head of the line, General O'Hara, elegantly mounted, advanced to his Excel-

lency the Commander in Chief, taking off his hat, and apologized for the non-appearance of Earl Cornwallis. With his usual dignity and politeness his Excellency pointed to Major General Lincoln for directions, by whom the British army was conducted into a spacious field where it was intended they should ground their arms."

Truly, the high tide of the American Revolution was reached.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE EBBING TIDE

AGAIN "a private old man" sits, pen in hand, babbling in his picturesque way to Sir Horace Mann, under date of November 29, 1781:

"I mentioned on Tuesday the captivity of Lord Cornwallis and his army, the Columbus who was to bestow America on us again. A second army taken in a drag-net is an uncommon event, and happened but once to the Romans, who sought adventures everywhere. We have not lowered our tone on this new disgrace, though I think we shall talk no more of insisting on *implicit submission*, which would rather be a gasconade than firmness. In fact, there is one very unlucky circumstance already come out, which must drive every American, to a man, from ever calling himself our friend. By the tenth article of the capitulation, Lord Cornwallis demanded that the loyal Americans in his army should not be punished. This was flatly refused, and he has left them to be hanged. I doubt no vote of Parliament will be able to blanch such a—such a—I don't know what the word is for it; he must get his uncle the Archbishop to christen it; there is no name for it in any Pagan vocabulary. I suppose it will have a patent for being called Necessity. Well! there ends another volume of the American war. It looks a little as if the history of it would be all we

should have for it, except forty millions of debt, and three other wars that have grown out of it, and that do not seem so near to a conclusion. They say that Monsieur de Maurepas, who is dying, being told that the Duc de Lauzun had brought the news of Lord Cornwallis's surrender, said, from Racine's *Mithridate* I think:—

*'Mes derniers regards ont vu fuir les Romains.'*

“How Lord Chatham will frown when they meet!...

“The warmth in the House of Commons is prodigiously rekindled; but Lord Cornwallis's fate has cost the Administration no ground *there*. The names of most *éclat* in the Opposition are two names to which those walls have been much accustomed at the same period—Charles Fox and William Pitt, second son of Lord Chatham. Eloquence is the only one of our brilliant qualities that does not seem to have degenerated rapidly—but I shall leave debates to your nephew, now an ear-witness: I could only re-echo newspapers. Is it not another odd coincidence of events, that while the father Laurens is prisoner to Lord Cornwallis as Constable of the Tower, the son Laurens signed the capitulation by which Lord Cornwallis became prisoner? It is said too, I don't know if truly, that this capitulation and that of Saratoga were signed on the same anniversary. These are certainly the speculations of an idle man, and the more trifling when one considers the moment. But alas! what would my most grave speculations avail? From the hour that fatal egg, the Stamp Act, was laid, I disliked it and all the vipers hatched from it. I now hear many curse it, who

fed the vermin with poisonous weeds. Yet the guilty and the innocent rue it equally hitherto! I would not answer for what is to come! Seven years of mis-carriages may sour the sweetest tempers, and the most sweetened. O! where is the Dove with the olive-branch? Long ago I told you that you and I might not live to see an end of the American war. It is very near its end indeed now—its consequences are far from a conclusion. In some respects, they are commencing a new date, which will reach far beyond *us*. I desire not to pry into that book of futurity.”<sup>1</sup>

Horace Walpole, always looking out for coincidences, could not but be struck by the almost exact correspondence of dates between this surrender and that of Burgoyne, three years before. and he mournfully asserts that he believes the two capitulations took place on exactly the same day. This, however, was not strictly the case, though the dates were very close together.

A little while after another commentator, marvellous in the force and fertility of his pamphlet work on the various aspects of the crises, the celebrated Tom Paine, wrote to Washington, September 2, 1782:

“I have the honor of presenting you with fifty copies of my Letter to the Abbé Raynal [dated Philadelphia, August 21, 1782] for the use of the army, and to repeat to you my acknowledgments for your friendship. I fully believe we have seen our worst days over. The spirit of the war, on the part of the enemy,

<sup>1</sup> *Letters of Horace Walpole*, vol. ii, p. 244.

is certainly on the decline, full as much as we think for. I draw this opinion not only from the present promising appearances of things, and the difficulties we know the British Cabinet is in; but I add to it the peculiar effect which certain periods of time have, more or less, upon all men. The British have accustomed themselves to think of *seven years* in a manner different to other portions of time. They acquire this partly by habit, by reason, by religion, and by superstition. They serve seven years apprenticeship—they elect their parliament for seven years—they punish by seven years transportation, or the duplicate or triplicate of that term—they let their leases in the same manner, and they read that Jacob served seven years for one wife, and after that seven years for another; and this particular period of time, by a variety of concurrences, has obtained an influence in their mind. They have now had seven years of war, and are no further on the Continent than when they began. The superstitious and populous part will therefore conclude that *it is not to be*, and the rational part of them will think they have tried an unsuccessful and expensive project long enough, and by these two joining issue in the same eventual opinion, the obstinate part among them will be beaten out; unless, consistent with their former sagacity, they should get over the matter by an act of parliament ‘*to bind TIME in all cases whatsoever, or declare him a rebel.*’

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To this curious prophecy Washington almost smilingly replied:

“I have the pleasure to acknowledge your favor, informing me of your proposal to present me with fifty

copies of your last publication for the amusement of the army. For this intention you have my sincere thanks, not only on my own account, but for the pleasure, which I doubt not the gentlemen of the army will receive from the perusal of your pamphlets. Your observations on the *period of seven years*, as it applies to British minds, are ingenious, and I wish it may not fail of its effects in the present instance."

Up to Yorktown, indeed, had for nearly seven years steadily flowed the tide of revolution, slowly but steadily increasing in force and volume from 1775 to 1781, until the high tide was reached that October morning.

The ecstatic scene enacted at Franklin's lodgings at Passy, in December, 1777, when the news of Burgoyne's disaster reached the American envoys to the French court, was almost literally repeated.

"It was not until December 4, 1777, that there broke a great and sudden rift in the solid cloudiness. First there came a vague rumor of good news no one at all knew what; then a post-chaise drove into Dr. Franklin's courtyard, and from it hastily alighted the young messenger, Jonathan Loring Austin, whom Congress had sent express from Philadelphia, and who had accomplished an extraordinarily rapid journey. The American group of envoys and agents were all there, gathered by the mysterious report which had reached them, and at the sound of the wheels they ran out into the court-yard and eagerly surrounded the chaise. 'Sir,' exclaimed Franklin, 'is Philadelphia taken?' 'Yes, sir,' replied Austin; and Franklin clasped his hands and turned to reënter the house. But Austin cried that he

bore greater news: that General Burgoyne and his whole army were prisoners of war! At the words the glorious sunshine burst forth. Beaumarchais, the ecstatic, sprang into his carriage and drove madly for the city to spread the story; but he upset his vehicle and dislocated his arm. The envoys hastily read and wrote; in a few hours Austin was again on the road, this time bound to de Vergennes at Versailles, to tell the great tidings. Soon all Paris got the news and burst into triumphant rejoicing over the disaster to England.”<sup>1</sup>

“The capitulation to Mr. Gates,” as the British were pleased to designate the surrender of Burgoyne, brought immediately, as its richest fruit, the French Alliance; the surrender of Cornwallis brought “independency,” as the writers of that day quaintly phrased it.

The venerable philosopher, so strongly intrenched in French favour, could scarcely contain himself for the rapturous joy which the news brought him. Long before, he had cast a deep glance into the heart of English diplomacy when he laconically remarked, “The British ministry are unable to continue the war and are too proud to give it up.”

This was exactly true.

Franklin, the patriarch of American envoys, who at seventy-six possessed more sense than any man he had ever seen, said John Jay, had been for years caressing Vergennes, the French Minister, and the French Court with the playful antics of a septua-

<sup>1</sup> Morse, *Benjamin Franklin*, p. 267.





JOHN JAY.  
From a steel engraving.



genarian kitten. His delicate tact, his mastery over the conventional courtesies of European life, his face, luminous with benevolence, his scientific exploits, the quaintness of his Quaker costume—even his “Franklin” spectacles, his wigless head, and broad-brimmed hat—had endeared him to the French and made him a universal favourite. In character, he was one of those mellow mixtures of acid and oil that baffle the psychologist—and radiate optimism on the just and the unjust alike. In his correspondence, the acid frequently eats up the oil; in his public utterances, the oil overspreads the tempestuous sea and smooths every wrinkle out of it.

The ablest diplomatist of the eighteenth century, as Bancroft calls him, his smiling omniscience extended over every quarter of the globe and into every corner of literature and science. Medals were struck in his honour; epigrams were showered on his head; he was reputed to be the only American man-of-the-world of his century. Bland philosopher, acute inventor, universal lover of his kind as he was, the twinkle of his eye, the humour of his tongue, the charm of his conversation and his supreme wisdom, made him the one man most essential for America to have abroad at this time—an influence, a presence, a heart, a soul in the soulless diplomacy of the hour wherein the wily Vergennes, selfish to the core, thinking only of France, ruled supreme. Socrates did not more hopefully strive to be a citizen of all the world than Benjamin Franklin really was.

Associated with him in his foreign mission, were two men of great gifts and irreproachable character, John Adams of Massachusetts, who succeeded Washington as second President of the United States, and John Jay, later, first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of his country; and, together, the three, Argus-eyed in the interests of Congress, began to scan the European heavens, watch for indications of peace, and secure for their country the highest possible good to be wrenched, if need be, from the reluctant cabinets of London, Paris, and Madrid.

Adams, stubborn, suspicious, blunt, a trifle supercilious, learned in the technical law, but unlearned in the codes of etiquette and diplomacy, a blurt-out of unwelcome truths, unacquainted with the niceties of European intercourse at the foreign office; frank, fearless, blunderingly honest, Adams was of the stuff to endure such insults as George III.'s turning his back on him, and yet surviving the insult; tolerating the insolence of Lord North and Lord Germaine and the coterie of Downing Street; and bearing such scourging at the epistolary whipping-post, as Vergennes, from time to time, administered to him in his bitter letters to Congress.

Of these diplomatic missionaries, he was the St. Paul in that celebrated chapter of II. Corinthians, in which the penal autobiography of the Apostle is recorded.

Deeply schooled by his residence at Madrid in the crafts of Spanish intrigue, John Jay, who had

more of Adams than of Franklin in his constitution, saw speedily into the crookedness of Vergennes and the Spanish family compact, viewed all things from the perch of sound international law, and was vigilant in his watch over all boundary questions in which the subtle Latin races might claim an interest.

Thus admirably represented abroad, America might well await the consequences of Yorktown almost with indifference. A year more, and these consequences had wrought themselves out to the fullest satisfaction of the patriots.

The perfect joy of Yorktown was, however, marred for Washington by one sharp personal sorrow, the death of his stepson John Parke Custis, who died of camp-fever shortly after the surrender, leaving a family of small children two of whom Washington adopted as his own. It is to one of these children, George Washington Parke Custis the orator, writer, and owner of Arlington, that history owes the delightful *Recollections and Private Memoirs of Washington*, from which we have freely quoted in the earlier part of this biography. The other was the lovely "Nellie" Custis, whose lustrous eyes look out of the portrait found in the Lee Collection at Lexington.

Washington's flying visit to his venerable mother, at Fredericksburg near by, is thus described by G. W. P. Custis, in the curious Johnsonian style of the early part of the last century :

"Late in the year 1781, on the return of the com-

bined armies from Yorktown, the mother of Washington was permitted again to see and embrace her illustrious son, the first time in almost seven years. As soon as he had dismounted, in the midst of a numerous and brilliant suite, after reaching Fredericksburg, he sent to apprise her of his arrival, and to know when it would be her pleasure to receive him. And now, reader, mark the force of early education and habits, and the superiority of the Spartan over the Persian school, in this interview of the Great Washington with his admirable parent and instructor. No pageantry of war proclaimed his coming, no trumpets sounded, no banners waved. Alone and on foot, the general-in-chief of the combined armies of France and America, the deliverer of his country, the hero of the age, repaired to pay his humble duty to her whom he venerated as the author of his being—the founder of his fortune and his fame; for full well he knew that the matron was made of sterner stuff than to be moved by all the pride that glory ever gave, and all the pomp and circumstance of power.

“She was alone, her aged hands employed in the works of domestic industry, when the good news was announced, and it was further told, that the victor-chief was in waiting at the threshold. She bid him welcome by a warm embrace, and by the well-remembered and endearing name of George—the familiar name of his childhood; she inquired as to his health, remarked the lines which mighty cares and many toils had made in his manly countenance, spoke much of old times and old friends, but of his glory not one word.

“Meantime, in the village of Fredericksburg, all was joy and revelry; the town was crowded with the



MAJOR-GENERAL BENJAMIN LINCOLN.

From a steel engraving.





officers of the French and American armies, and with gentlemen for many miles around, who hastened to welcome the conquerors of Cornwallis. The citizens got up a splendid ball, to which the matron was specially invited. She observed, that although her dancing days were pretty well over, she should feel happy in contributing to the general festivity, and consented to attend.

“The foreign officers were anxious to see the mother of their chief. They had heard indistinct rumors touching her remarkable life and character, but forming their judgments from European examples, they were prepared to expect in the mother, that glitter and show which would have been attached to the parents of the great, in the countries of the old world. How were they surprised, when leaning on the arm of her son, she entered the room, dressed in the very plain, yet becoming garb, worn by the Virginia lady of the old time. Her address always dignified and imposing, was courteous, though reserved. She received the complimentary attentions which were paid to her without evincing the slightest elevation, and at an early hour, wishing the company much enjoyment of their pleasures, observed, that it was high time for old folks to be in bed, and retired, leaning as before on the arm of her son.

“The foreign officers were amazed in beholding one whom so many causes conspired to elevate, preserving the even tenor of her life, while such a blaze of glory shone upon her name and offspring. It was a moral spectacle such as the European world had furnished no examples [of]. Names of ancient lore were heard to escape from their lips; and they de-

clared, 'if such are the matrons in America, well may she boast of illustrious sons.'

"It was on this festive occasion, that General Washington danced a minuet with Mrs. Willis. It closed his dancing days. The minuet was much in vogue at that period, and was peculiarly calculated for the display of the splendid figure of the chief, and his natural grace and elegance of air and manner. The gallant Frenchmen who were present, of which fine people it may be said that dancing forms one of the elements of their existence, so much admired the American performance, as to admit that a Parisian education could not have improved it. As the evening advanced, the commander-in-chief yielding to the general gayety of the scene, went down some dozen couples in the contredance with great spirit and satisfaction."

This idyllic scene from the olden time throws a charming and truthful light upon one side of Washington's character—his devotion to his mother, and the simple joy he felt in her presence and in that of his intimate friends. When the Revolution closed a year later, the General never again danced, said Mrs. Alexander Hamilton, though often tempted to do so by the beautiful women who caressed and adored him.

From this gleam of friendly joy at Fredericksburg, so intimately associated with his schoolboy days, he passed on to his beloved Mount Vernon, and loitering a while there, hurried to his official responsibilities at Philadelphia. In this lively city he spent the winter of 1782, overwhelmed with ad-

dresses, balls, parties, ovations of every kind, the centre of all the festivities given in honour of the Continental armies and their achievements.

Wilmington, North Carolina, was soon evacuated by the invader, who now concentrated all his forces in the South at Charleston and Savannah, and affairs in that region sped swimmingly to a conclusion, till, towards the middle of December, the British marched out of Charleston, and General Greene, who "lost so many battles and won so many campaigns," marched in amid the grateful acclamations of the people. Old St. Michael's never pealed a merrier chime, the harbour batteries of Fort Moultrie and Sullivan's Island never emitted more joyous thunders than on this occasion.

Firm as King and Parliament were in their zeal still to prosecute the war, gaily as the exchange of prisoners went on through official cartels, exchanged, as the captive Cornwallis might be, for the captured Laurens, affairs rounded in but slowly towards peace, which now, to both sides, had become the sweetest and strongest emotion of the hour. In May, Sir Guy Carleton and Admiral Digby, at New York, were appointed a Peace Commission to sound the colonies (now ex-colonies for all generations to come) and treat with commissioners from Congress on the all-important matter of a settlement.

About the same time, a singular letter came to the Commander-in-chief which, with Washington's reply, is so characteristic of the monarchical and re-

publican principles at stake in the contest, that both must be quoted.

A German royalist, Lewis Nicola, Colonel of the Invalid Regiment in the American service, deeming the Government unstable and the Congress too impoverished to settle the enormous arrearages of pay due the soldiers, wrote the following letter to his commander, while the army was in camp at Newburgh on the Hudson:

“ I little doubt, that, when the benefits of a mixed government are pointed out, and duly considered, such will be readily adopted. In this case it will, I believe, be uncontroverted, that the same abilities, which have led us through difficulties, apparently insurmountable by human power, to victory and glory, those qualities, that have merited and obtained the universal esteem and veneration of an army, would be most likely to conduct and direct us in the smoother paths of peace. Some people have so connected the ideas of tyranny and monarchy, as to find it very difficult to separate them. It may therefore be requisite to give the head of such a constitution, as I propose, some title apparently more moderate; but, if all other things were once adjusted, I believe strong arguments might be produced for admitting the title of King, which I conceive would be attended with some material advantages.”

Washington replied :

“ With a mixture of great surprise and astonishment, I have read with attention the sentiments you have submitted to my perusal. Be assured, Sir, no

occurrence in the course of the war has given me more painful sensations, than your information of there being such ideas existing in the army, as you have expressed, and I must view with abhorrence and reprehend with severity. . . .

"...I am much at a loss to conceive what part of my conduct could have given encouragement to an address, which to me seems big with the greatest mischiefs, that can befall my country. If I am not deceived in the knowledge of myself, you could not have found a person to whom your schemes are more disagreeable."

A painful light is cast upon the sincerity of the peace negotiations referred to, in a letter written at this time by Washington to Colonel John Laurens:

"Sir Guy Carleton is using every art to soothe and lull our people into a state of security. Admiral Digby is capturing all our vessels, and suffocating as fast as possible in prison-ships all our seamen, who will not enlist into the service of his Britannic Majesty; and Haldimand [Governor-General of Quebec] with his savage allies, is scalping and burning on the frontiers. Such is the line of conduct pursued by the different commanders, and such their politics."

As long as such things could go on, peace seemed like a dipping gull, now rising from, now sinking into the seething waters, a hovering, unstable thing, unable to alight anywhere in these distracted lands.

Especially impossible did it seem, when Admiral Rodney defeated and captured De Grasse and his fleet in the West Indies in April, and Yorktown for

a moment was brilliantly avenged. True, all this time the privateers, commissioned by Franklin, were scouring the Channel and scourging the high seas, pouncing with "Alabama"-like swiftness on the fat British coasting-trade, multiplying abundantly in the regions where buccaneer and filibuster, before and after this time, so sadly distinguished themselves, and realising the old viking spirit in a thousand picturesque, sanguinary forms never dreamt of by the Norse sea-rovers.

John Paul Jones, the Scotch gardener, and others like him, were already starting the germs of that sea-power which sprang, first and foremost, from the daring achievements of Yankee skippers, hunting the elusive whale in the Arctic seas, ripened quickly to the achievements of 1812, and, by the time the year 1860 came around, rendered the United States Commercial Navy the swiftest and finest in the world.

Yet for all this retrospective and prospective success, Washington could only gloomily write to James McHenry, as late as September of this year (1782):

"That the King will push the war, as long as the nation will find men and money, admits not of a doubt in my mind. The whole tenor of his conduct, as well as his last proroguing speech, on the 11th of July, plainly indicates it, and shows in a clear point of view the impolicy of relaxation on our part. If we are wise, let us prepare for the worst. There is nothing, which

will so soon produce a speedy and honorable peace, as a state of preparation for war ; and we must either do this, or lay our account to patch up an inglorious peace, after all the toil, blood, and treasure we have spent."

The readiness of the Americans to go on with the war is thus attested by the Prince de Broglie, who seeing them in their quarters at Verplanck's on the Hudson, thus describes them to a correspondent :

"The whole army was paraded under arms this morning in order to honor his Excellency Count Rochambeau on his arrival from the southward. The troops were all formed in two lines extending from the ferry, where the count crossed, to headquarters. A troop of horse met and received him at King's ferry, and conducted him through the line to General Washington's quarters, where sitting on his horse by the side of his Excellency, the whole army marched before him and paid the usual salute and honors. Our troops were now in complete uniform and exhibited every mark of soldierly discipline. Count Rochambeau was most highly gratified to perceive the very great improvement which our army had made in appearance since he last reviewed them, and expressed his astonishment at their rapid progress in military skill and discipline. He said to General Washington 'you must have formed an alliance with the King of Prussia. These troops are Prussians.' Several of the principal officers of the French army who have seen troops of different European nations, have bestowed the highest encomiums and applause on our army, and declared that they had seen none superior to the Americans."

Another disinterested observer writes of the Commander :

“ One of my most earnest wishes was to see Washington, the hero of America. He was then encamped at a short distance from us, and the Count de Rochambeau was kind enough to introduce me to him. Too often reality disappoints the expectations our imagination had raised, and admiration diminishes by a too near view of the object upon which it had been bestowed ; but, on seeing General Washington, I found a perfect similarity between the impression produced upon me by his aspect, and the idea I had formed of him. His exterior disclosed, as it were, the history of his life : simplicity, grandeur, dignity, calmness, goodness, firmness, the attributes of his character, were also stamped upon his features, and in all his person. His stature was noble and elevated ; the expression of his features mild and benevolent ; his smile graceful and pleasing ; his manners simple, without familiarity. . . . Washington, when I saw him, was forty-nine years of age. He endeavored modestly to avoid the marks of admiration and respect which were so anxiously offered to him, and yet no man ever knew better how to receive and to acknowledge them. He listened, with an obliging attention, to all those who addressed him, and the expression of his countenance had conveyed his answer before he spoke.”

Hardly is it to be wondered at, that a man of this character, so simple, so lofty, so commanding, should now grasp the reins of moral power with supreme firmness, and control a situation which had become nearly tragic. This situation unfolded during the



year 1783, out of the intolerable suspense and sufferings of the soldiers whose patience had worn out about their pay, and whose bitterness was nourished by anonymous articles scattered about the camp, instigated, it is thought, by General Gates. The scene was one of the most pathetic in all Washington's career.

An unsigned address, due to a certain Major Armstrong, awoke the spirit of insurrection in the bosom of the soldiers.

“ The voice of the armed man was rising clearly and distinctly now. It declared the sufferings and sorrows of the soldier and the ingratitude of Congress, and called the army to action and to the use of force. Thus the direct appeal was made. Only one man could keep words from becoming deeds, and Washington came forward and took control of the whole movement. He censured the address in general orders, and then called, himself, a meeting of the officers. When they had assembled, Washington arose with a manuscript in his hand, and as he took out his glasses he said: ‘ You see, gentlemen, I have grown both blind and gray in your service.’ Very simple words, very touching, with a pathos which no rhetoric could give, a pathos possible only in a great nature deeply stirred. And then he read his speech—clear, vigorous, elevated in tone, an appeal to the past and to patriotism, an earnest prayer to leave that past unsullied and to show confidence in the Government and the civil power, the whole ending with a promise that the General would obtain justice for the army.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lodge, *The Story of the Revolution*, p. 545.

“A meeting of the officers of the army at the ‘New Building,’ conformably to the notification given in the general orders of the 11th, General Gates as senior officer presiding. The meeting was opened by the Commander-in-Chief, who read an address, reminding those present of the cause for which they had taken up arms, and appealing to them not to adopt measures which might cast a shade over that glory which had been so justly acquired, and tarnish the reputation of an army which was celebrated through all Europe for its fortitude and patriotism. By thus determining and thus acting, you will give one more distinguished proof of unexampled patriotism and patient virtue, rising superior to the pressure of the most complicated sufferings; and you will, by the dignity of your conduct, afford occasion for posterity to say, when speaking of the glorious example you have exhibited to mankind, ‘Had this day been wanting, the world had never seen the last stage of perfection, to which human nature is capable of attaining.’”<sup>1</sup>

In reference to the whole matter, Washington in an official communication to Congress says as simply as possible:

“At Newburgh.

“I have the honor to inform your Excellency, for the satisfaction of Congress, that the meeting of the officers, which was mentioned in my last, was held yesterday; and that it has terminated in a manner, which I had reason to expect, from a knowledge of that good sense and steady patriotism of the gentlemen of the army, which on frequent occasions I have discovered.”

<sup>1</sup> Baker, *Itinerary of General Washington*, vol. i, p. 290.

“ At Newburgh.

“ *Orderly Book*.—The Commander-in-Chief is highly satisfied with the report of the proceedings of the officers assembled on the 15th instant, in obedience to the orders of the 11th. He begs his inability to communicate an adequate idea of the pleasing feelings which have been excited in his breast by the affectionate sentiments expressed toward him on that occasion, may be considered as an apology for his silence.”

The tide was now swiftly ebbing towards peace.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### A "MERRIE CHRISTMAS"

THE 30th of the previous November,—it was now March, 1783,—had seen the signing of the preliminaries of peace at Paris, after long and difficult negotiations between Oswald, Grenville, and Strachey on behalf of the British, and Franklin, Adams, Jay, and Laurens on behalf of the other side. Perhaps the very news of peace excited the suspicions of the army that Congress would disband them without settling its accounts, and that thus their sufferings would never be requited.

This mutinous spirit, which had before filled the Pennsylvania and Jersey troops, and had lately caused Congress to flee in terror from Philadelphia to Princeton, was, not without reason, attributed to Gates, "about whom hangs the odious aroma of impotent malice"; the ambiguous politician-commander had claimed the glory of Saratoga, had been forced to retire after his crushing defeat by Cornwallis at Camden, South Carolina, and, now reinstated, had by the magnanimity of Washington been put in command of the right wing of the American Army at the New York headquarters.

Perhaps the return of the French troops, in October and January, aroused that longing for home,

"the desire to kiss wives and sweethearts,"—which all along had made the American soldiers' position one of peculiar hardship. Washington's keen appreciation of the fortitude of his men crops out in a letter of congratulation to General Greene, on the happy ending of the Charleston campaign :

"It is with a pleasure, which friendship only is susceptible of, that I congratulate you on the glorious end you have put to hostilities in the Southern States. The honor and advantages of it, I hope and trust you will long live to enjoy . . . If historiographers should be hardy enough to fill the page of History with the advantages, that have been gained with unequal numbers, (on the part of America) in the course of this contest, and attempt to relate the distressing circumstances under which they have been obtained, it is more than probable, that Posterity will bestow on their labors the epithet and marks of fiction; for it will not be believed, that such a force as Great Britain has employed for eight years in this country could be baffled in their plan of subjugating it, by numbers infinitely less, composed of men oftentimes half starved, always in Rags, without pay, and experiencing at times every species of distress, which human nature is capable of undergoing. I intended to have wrote you a long letter on sundry matters; but Major Burnet popped in unexpectedly at a time, when I was preparing for the celebration of the day, and was just going to a review of the troops, previous to the *feu de joie*."

When the good ship *Washington*, Captain Burney, brought to Philadelphia the joyful tidings of the signing of the peace preliminaries, the Commander's

observations to the president of Congress were as follows :

“ I have the honor to acknowledge your Excellency’s favor of the 12th instant, and to thank you most sincerely for the intelligence you were pleased to communicate. The articles of treaty between America and Great Britain are as full and as satisfactory as we had reason to expect ; but, from the connexion in which they stand with a general pacification, they are very inconclusive and contingent.”

To Alexander Hamilton, one of his most efficient aides, counsellors, and friends, he wrote some ten days later :

“ I rejoice most exceedingly that there is an end to our warfare, and that such a field is opening to our view, as will, with wisdom to direct the cultivation of it, make us a great, a respectable, and happy people ; but it must be improved by other means than State politics, and unreasonable jealousies and prejudices, or (it requires not the second sight to see that) we shall be instruments in the hands of our enemies, and those European powers, who may be jealous of our greatness in union, to dissolve the confederation. But, to obtain this, although the way seems extremely plain, is not so easy.

“ It remains only for the States to be wise, and to establish their independence on the basis of an inviolable, efficacious union, and a firm confederation, which may prevent their being made the sport of European policy. May heaven give them wisdom to adopt the measures still necessary for this important purpose.”

His prayer for an inviolable Union was thus early and thus forcefully expressed, and no less great was his dread that the confederation might prove a rope of sand. This dread was further emphasised in a remarkable letter to LaFayette in the April of this year. His experience with a rebellious and insubordinate army appeared to fill him with horror at the prospect of dissolving and insubordinate States, run away with by the nightmare of individualism and State sovereignty.

"We stand now an Independent People, and have yet to learn political Tactics. We are placed among the nations of the Earth, and have a character to establish; but how we shall acquit ourselves, time must discover. The probability is (at least I fear it) that local or State politics will interfere too much with the more liberal and extensive plan of government, which wisdom and foresight, freed from the mist of prejudice, would dictate; and that we shall be guilty of many blunders in treading this boundless theatre, before we shall have arrived at any perfection in this art; in a word, that the experience, which is purchased at the price of difficulties and distress, will alone convince us, that the honor, power, and true Interest of this Country must be measured by a Continental scale, and that every departure therefrom weakens the Union, and may ultimately break the band which holds us together."

April 6th became an ever-memorable day in the annals of the war, as the day on which Sir Guy Carleton, at New York, announced to Washington

official tidings of the offered ratification of the peace terms by his Majesty's government. The letters exchanged by the two commanders follow:

#### CARLETON TO WASHINGTON

"A packet from England arrived in this port last night, by which I have despatches from Mr. Townshend, one of his Majesty's principal Secretaries of State, communicating official intelligence, that preliminary articles of peace with France and Spain were signed at Paris on the 20th of January last, and that the ratifications have been since exchanged at the same place. The King, Sir, has been pleased in consequence of these events, to order proclamations to be published, declaring a cessation of arms, as well by sea as land; and his Majesty's pleasure signified, that I should cause the same to be published in all places under my command, in order that his Majesty's subjects may pay immediate and due obedience thereto; and such proclamation I shall accordingly cause to be made on Tuesday next, the 8th instant."

#### WASHINGTON TO CARLETON

"Wednesday, April 9.

"I feel great satisfaction from your Excellency's despatches by Captain Stapleton, conveying to me the joyful annunciation of your having received official accounts of the conclusion of a general peace, and a cessation of hostilities. Without official authority from Congress, but perfectly relying on your communication, I can at this time only issue my orders to the American out-posts, to suspend all acts of hostilities until further orders. This shall be instantly done; and I shall be happy in the momentary expectation of



having it in my power to publish to the American army a general cessation of hostilities between Great Britain and America."

Years before, in a small Massachusetts village, the opening of hostilities had begun with the "Minute men," all alert and aflame to resent the invasion of their rights. On the same 19th of April, eight years later, an order in the General's Orderly Book directed:

"The Commander-in-Chief orders the cessation of hostilities, between the United States and the King of Great Britain, to be publicly proclaimed to-morrow at twelve at the New Building; and that the Proclamation, which will be communicated herewith, be read to-morrow evening at the head of every regiment and corps of the army; after which the Chaplains with the several brigades will render thanks to Almighty God for all His mercies, particularly for His overruling the wrath of man to His glory, and causing the rage of war to cease among the nations."

Washington and Governor Clinton dined on board the Admiral's frigate at Dobb's Ferry, and here, when Washington left, the first salute of seventeen guns was fired in honour of the American nation and the American commander, May 8th, very near the date when, 176 years before, the Jamestown pilgrims first beheld the beautiful shores of Hampton Roads and the wide savannahs, down which poured the floods of the Chesapeake, the Potomac, and the James.

These 176 years had, indeed, seen marvellous

things on this side of the Atlantic:—a speck, a dot of population here and there, great empty wildernesses filled with life and activity; vast solitary bays and rivers and estuaries, unflecked save by the white wing of crane and heron and gull, now swarming with sea-craft and sea-power of every description; towns and cities sprung as if by magic from reeds and marshes, from pine groves and magnolia groves; everywhere, along hundreds of miles of coast-line, sturdy little commonwealths of English, Dutch, and Huguenot parentage founded and flourishing; everywhere, the vast interior receding before the advancing settlers, new mountain chains crossed and conquered, rivers mightier still discovered and, like fiery steeds, made to feel the bit and bridle of incipient inland commerce: in short, a new, beautiful, glorious world as absolutely novel as the other side of the moon would be, could it be brought within the ken of the telescope.

Never was a new world won and lost under more extraordinary circumstances.

It was at this time that, exchanging momentarily the sword for the pen, Washington, urged by the necessity of the occasion—his ever-present dread of a dissolution of the Union,—wrote the Circular Letter to the governors of the thirteen States, which, for power and felicity of statement in its recognition of the peculiar dangers menacing the Republic, has never been surpassed. In it he says:

“There are four things, which, I humbly conceive, are essential to the well-being, I may even venture to

say, to the existence of the United States, as an independent power.

"First. An indissoluble union of the States under one federal head.

"Secondly. A sacred regard to public justice.

"Thirdly. The adoption of a proper peace establishment; and,

"Fourthly. The prevalence of that pacific and friendly disposition among the people of the United States, which will induce them to forget their local prejudices and policies; to make those mutual concessions, which are requisite to the general prosperity; and, in some instances, to sacrifice their individual advantages to the interest of the community.

"These are the pillars on which the glorious fabric of our independency and national character must be supported. Liberty is the best basis; and whoever would dare to sap the foundation, or overturn the structure under whatever specious pretext he may attempt it, will merit the bitterest execration, and the severest punishment, which can be inflicted by his injured country."<sup>1</sup>

Proceeding to discuss three of these four points in detail, he leaves behind him a "legacy" to his country, as he calls it, unexampled for wisdom, far-sightedness, and just appreciation of the perils of the moment. The noble words with which this composition closes must for ever remove the doubt whether Washington was a Christian:

"I make it my earnest prayer, that God would have you, and the State over which you preside, in his holy

<sup>1</sup> Ford, *Writings of George Washington*, vol. x, p. 257.

protection ; that he would incline the hearts of the citizens to cultivate a spirit of subordination and obedience to government ; to entertain a brotherly affection and love for one another, for their fellow citizens of the United States at large, and particularly for their brethren who have served in the field ; and finally, that he would most graciously be pleased to dispose us all to do justice, to love mercy, and to demean ourselves with that charity, humility, and pacific temper of mind, which were the characteristics of the Divine Author of our blessed religion, and without an humble imitation of whose example in these things, we can never hope to be a happy nation."

One of the closest students of Washington's career presents, in striking terms, the facts of the General's unceasing devotion to religion and to religious observances, the more striking because the critic is an Englishman :

"Among the first five Presidents of the United States, including all who may be fairly classed as contemporaries of the Revolution, no fewer than three were Episcopalians ; and a better Churchman,—or at all events, a better man who ranked himself as a Churchman,—than George Washington it would have been hard indeed to discover. When at home on the bank of the Potomac, he had always gone of a Sunday morning to what would have been called a distant church by any one except a Virginian equestrian ; and he spent Sunday afternoons, alone and unapproachable, in his library. In war he found time for daily prayer and meditation, (as, by no wish of his, the absence of privacy, which is a feature in camp life, re-

vealed to those who were immediately about him;) he attended public worship himself; and by every available means he encouraged the practice of religion in his soldiers, to whom he habitually stood in a kind of fatherly relation. There are many pages in his Orderly Books which indicate a determination that the multitude of young fellows, who were entrusted to his charge, should have all possible facilities for being as well-behaved as in their natural native villages. The troops were excused fatigue-duty in order that they might not miss church. If public worship was interrupted on a Sunday, by the call to arms, a service was held on a convenient day in the ensuing week. The chaplains were exhorted to urge the soldiers that they ought to live and act like Christian men in times of distress and danger; and after every great victory, and more particularly at the final proclamation of Peace, the Commander-in-Chief earnestly recommended that the army should universally attend the rendering of thanks to Almighty God 'with seriousness of deportment, and gratitude of heart.'

"It therefore was," continues Trevelyan, "the more noticeable that he ceased to be a regular Communicant as long as the war lasted. Washington always had his reasons for what he did, or left undone; but he seldom gave them; and his motive for abstaining from the Sacrament was not a subject on which he would be inclined to break his ordinary rule of reticence. On one occasion during his campaigns he is known to have taken the Communion under circumstances which throw some light upon his inward convictions. While the army was quartered at Morristown, the Presbyterians of the place were about to hold their half-yearly

administration. Washington paid a visit to their minister, and enquired whether it accorded with the canon of his Church to admit Communicants of another denomination. 'Most certainly,' the clergyman answered. 'Ours is not the Presbyterian table, General, but the Lord's table.' 'I am glad of it,' said Washington. 'That is as it ought to be. Though a member of the Church of England, I have no exclusive partialities.' And, accordingly, on the next Sunday he took his place among the Communicants. Washington loved his own Church the best, and had no mind to leave it; but he was not hostile to any faith which was sincerely held, and which exerted a restraining and correcting influence upon human conduct. 'I am disposed,' he once told LaFayette, 'to indulge the professors of Christianity with that road to Heaven which to them shall seem the most direct, plainest, easiest, and least liable to exception.' His feeling on this matter was accurately expressed in the instructions which he wrote out for Benedict Arnold, when that officer led an armed force of fierce and stern New England Protestants against Roman Catholic settlements in Canada. The whole paper was a lesson in the statesmanship which is founded on respect and consideration for others, and still remains well worth reading. In after years, as President of the United States, Washington enjoyed frequent opportunities for impressing his own sentiments and policy, in all that related to religion, upon the attention of his compatriots. The Churches of America were never tired of framing and presenting Addresses which assured him of their confidence, veneration, and sympathy; and he as invariably replied by congratulating them that in their happy country

worship was free, and that men of every creed were eligible to every post of honour and authority."<sup>1</sup>

For the "Circular Letter," a critic so calm and discriminating as Fiske cannot withhold his admiration:

"The unparalleled grandeur of Washington's character, his heroic services, and his utter disinterestedness had given him such a hold upon the people as scarcely any other statesman known to history, save perhaps William the Silent, has ever possessed. The noble and sensible words of his circular letter were treasured up in the minds of all the best people in the country, and when the time for reforming the weak and disorderly government had come it was again to Washington that men looked as their leader and guide. But that time had not yet come."

Indeed, the moral energy of the chief seemed to increase, as the ebbing tide of Revolution receded more and more from the physical passions aroused by the war; his vision cleared; he saw with strange clairvoyance far into the future of his country, and he endeavoured with all his might to forestall diffi-

<sup>1</sup> Trevelyan, *The American Revolution*, part ii, vol. ii, p. 316.

"We have abundant reason to rejoice" (so, in January, 1793, the President told the Members of the New Church of Baltimore) "that every person may here worship God according to the dictates of his own heart. In this enlightened age, and in this land of equal liberty, it is our boast that a man's religious tenets will not forfeit the protection of the laws, nor deprive him of the right of attaining, and of holding, the highest offices that are known in the United States"—*Ibid.*

culties, remove obstacles, and smooth the way for a perfect union between the States. Believing, as he did, in "the pure and benign light of Revelation" (his very words in the "Circular Letter"), he constantly invoked the Divine benediction on his work and prayed continually for the blessing of Heaven on the cause of American Independence. A recent historian asserts that England has had four great statesmen: William the Conqueror, establisher of the realm; Edward I, founder of the real England; Cromwell, founder of the sea-power of England; Chatham, founder of the colonial empire. To these must certainly be added Washington, founder of the Republic of the West.

As the soldiers were about to separate, and the officers to return to their homes, the happy thought occurred of forming a permanent society of veterans of the Revolution who, as they were returning, literally to the plough, bethought themselves of calling the association "The Society of the Cincinnati," in memory of the Roman consul.

"'While contemplating a final separation of the officers of the army,' says Doctor Thacher, 'the tenderest feelings of the heart had their afflicting operations. It was at the suggestion of General Knox, and with the acquiescence of the Commander in Chief, that an expedient was devised by which a hope was entertained that their long cherished friendship and social intercourse might be perpetuated, and that at future periods they might annually communicate, and revive a recollection of the bonds by which they were



connected.' In pursuance of these suggestions a meeting was held on the 10th day of May, at which a committee was appointed to revise the proposals for such an institution. The report of the committee was accepted at a meeting held May 13th, at the quarters of Baron Steuben, in the Verplanck house, near Fish-kill Landing, and the 'Society of the Cincinnati,' with a provision for the formation of State Societies, was organised. Washington officiated as president until his death."<sup>1</sup>

A great outcry arose over the country, when it was found that the "Cincinnati" formed a kind of secret Masonic society whose honours were to be hereditary, and could be shared by distinguished foreigners. Even Washington showed a little of this alarm and fought for the abolition of this hereditary feature.

November 2d saw one of the two last solemn acts of Washington's military career, his affectionate farewell to his troops at Princeton, where Congress had been lately sitting, and where his portrait was now to replace that of George III., in a frame which had received a volley of British bullets during the Trenton campaign. The pathos of the farewell is only exceeded by its good sense, lofty patriotism, and heartfelt gratitude over the success of the American arms. This success was abundantly acknowledged in the ten articles of the Treaty of Paris, signed by David Hartley on behalf of his Britannic Majesty, and by John Adams,

<sup>1</sup> Baker, *Itinerary of General Washington*, vol. i, p. 300.

Benjamin Franklin, and John Jay, September 3, 1783. In the very first article "The most serene and potent prince," George III., Elector, etc., acknowledges the complete independence of the thirteen colonies, fixes the vexed questions of boundary, throws open the fisheries to Americans (for which Adams had so stoutly contended), opens the navigation of the Mississippi to American and British trade and commerce (Jay's especial work); and left avenues open for the loyalists ("royalists," Franklin, resenting the implication, called them) to recover losses by legal process.

Franklin had not lived nearly twenty years in Europe, studying its wire-drawn diplomacy, without profiting by his long experience. His hand was visible in every part of the Treaty, which was the articulate product of a world of inarticulate babbling, intrigue, wrangling, and controversy. Every point had to be fought over a hundred times: the bigotry and intolerance of the King were only equalled by the toughness and obstinacy of the American commissioners, who had behind them the immense prestige of the Bourbon alliance, rendering them tougher still. The absolutely essential thing was Independence; though gained, great economic questions like that of the Newfoundland fisheries loomed up, and at length melted placidly into the welcoming arms of the obstinate Adams; and the desire of the King to hedge in the colonies between the Atlantic and the Alleghanies, while the Mississippi swept majestically through British ter-

ritory only, was thwarted by the watchful Jay. Of Franklin, an eminent English historian writes:

"Franklin's works were well known in France through several translations; his great discovery of the lightning conductor had been made when the Parisian enthusiasm for physical science was at its height, and it was soon found that the man was at least as remarkable as his works. Dressed with an almost Quaker simplicity, his thin grey hair not powdered according to the general fashion, but covered with a fur cap, he formed a singular and striking figure in the brilliant and artificial society of the French capital. His eminently venerable appearance, the quaint quiet dignity of his manner, the mingled wit and wisdom of his conversation, the unfailing tact, shrewdness, and self-possession which he showed, whether he was negotiating with French statesmen or moving in a social sphere so unlike that from which he had arisen, impressed all who came in contact with him. Vergennes declared him to be the only American in whom he put full confidence. Turgot in an immortal line, described him as having torn the lightning from heaven and the sceptre from the tyrant's hand.<sup>1</sup>

"Voltaire complimented him in his most graceful phrases, and expressed his pride that he was himself able to address him in, 'the language of Franklin.' Poets, philosophers, men and women of fashion, were alike at his feet, and all the enthusiasms and Utopias

<sup>1</sup>"The famous line, '*Eripuit cælo fulmen, sceptrumque tyrannis*,' was perhaps suggested by a passage in Manilius."  
—Lecky.

of France seemed to gather round that calm American, who, under the appearance of extreme simplicity, concealed the astuteness of the most accomplished diplomatist, and who never for a moment lost sight of the object at which he aimed. His correspondence and his Journal show clearly the half-amused, half-contemptuous, satisfaction with which he received the homage that was bestowed on him. It became the fashion to represent him as the ideal philosopher of Rousseau. He was compared by his admirers to Phocion, to Socrates, to William Tell, and even to Jesus Christ. His head, accompanied by the line of Turgot, appeared everywhere on snuff boxes and medallions and rings. He was the idol alike of the populace and of society, and he used all his influence to hurry France into war.”<sup>1</sup>

The drama of the Revolution could not close more fittingly than with Washington's beautiful words to Congress, as he handed over his sword to General Mifflin, president of that body. He had journeyed to Philadelphia and then to Annapolis on his way to Mount Vernon, which, with a single exception, he had seen but once in eight long years. It was nearly Christmas Eve, and the soul of the Commander-in-chief doubtless thrilled with emotion as he thought of the blazing log fires, the Christmas cheer, above all, the beaming faces awaiting him at the old mansion. About this place clustered now all his most precious hopes and aspirations—the tranquillity for which he had sighed so long, the

<sup>1</sup> Lecky, *England in the XVIIIth Century*, vol. iv, p. 51.

pleasant country occupations which had incessantly haunted him amid the turmoil of camps, intimate communion with his chosen friends, his own fire-side bright with a thousand memories of joy and happiness; the fishing, the fox-hunting, the delightful runs across country, the care of his estates, "the glass of wine and bit of mutton" which, he asserted, stood ever ready for his friends at his table—if they wanted more, they must go elsewhere: all this, and a thousand more things must have flowed now in a golden stream through that noble mind, now emptied of the cares of command, and ready to fill itself with the joys of home.

On the morning of December 23, 1783, the little town of Annapolis with its memories of good Queen Anne, its bright Severn River winding in and out the rich plantations, and its throng of citizens and congressmen witnessed a scene which Thackeray has embodied in some of his most fascinating pages.

"The alterations at Carlton House being finished, we lay before our readers a description of the state apartments as they appeared on the 10th instant, when H. R. H. gave a grand ball to the principal nobility and gentry. . . . The entrance to the state room fills the mind with an inexpressible idea of greatness and splendour.

"The state chair is of a gold frame, covered with crimson damask; on each corner of the feet is a lion's head, expressive of fortitude and strength; the feet of the chair have serpents twining round them, to denote wisdom. Facing the throne, appears the helmet

of Minerva; and over the windows, glory is represented by Saint George with a superb gloria.

“But the saloon may be styled the *chef-d’œuvre*, and in every ornament discovers great invention. It is hung with a figured lemon satin. The window-curtains, sofas, and chairs are of the same colour. The ceiling is ornamented with emblematical paintings, representing the Graces and Muses, together with Jupiter, Mercury, Apollo, and Paris. Two *ormolu* chandeliers are placed here. It is impossible by expression to do justice to the extraordinary workmanship, as well as design, of the ornaments. They each consist of a palm, branching out in five directions for the reception of lights. A beautiful figure of a rural nymph is represented entwining the stems of the tree with wreaths of flowers. In the centre of the room is a rich chandelier. To see this apartment *dans son plus beau jour*, it should be viewed in the glass over the chimney-piece. The range of apartments from the saloon to the ball-room, when the doors are open, formed one of the grandest spectacles that ever was beheld.”

In the *Gentleman's Magazine*, for the very same month and year—March, 1784—is an account of another festival, in which another great gentleman of English extraction is represented as taking a principal share:

“According to order, H. E. the Commander-in-Chief was admitted to a public audience of Congress; and, being seated, the President, after a pause, informed him that the United States assembled were

ready to receive his communications. Whereupon he arose, and spoke as follows:

" ' Mr. President,

" ' The great events, on which my resignation depended, having at length taken place, I have now the honour of offering my sincere congratulations to Congress, and of presenting myself before them, to surrender into their hands the trust committed to me, and to claim the indulgence of retiring from the service of my country.

" ' Happy in the confirmation of our independence and sovereignty, and pleased with the opportunity afforded the United States of becoming a respectable nation, I resign with satisfaction the appointment I accepted with diffidence; a diffidence in my abilities to accomplish so arduous a task, which, however, was superseded by a confidence in the rectitude of our cause, the support of the supreme power of the Union, and the patronage of Heaven.

" ' The successful termination of the war has verified the most sanguine expectations; and my gratitude for the interposition of Providence, and the assistance I have received from my countrymen, increases with every review of the momentous contest.

" ' While I repeat my obligations to the army in general, I should do injustice to my own feelings not to acknowledge, in this place, the peculiar services and distinguished merits of the gentlemen, who have been attached to my person during the war. It was impossible that the choice of confidential officers to compose my family should have been more fortunate. Permit me, Sir, to recommend in particular those, who have continued in service to the present moment,

as worthy of the favorable notice and patronage of Congress.

“ ‘ I consider it an indispensable duty to close this last solemn act of my official life, by commending the interests of our dearest country to the protection of Almighty God, and those who have the superintendence of them to his holy keeping.

“ ‘ Having now finished the work assigned me, I retire from the great theatre of action ; and, bidding an affectionate farewell to this august body under whose orders I have so long acted, I here offer my commission, and take my leave of all the employments of public life.’

“ To which the President replied :

“ ‘ Sir, having defended the standard of liberty in the New World, having taught a lesson useful to those who inflict and those who feel oppression, you retire with the blessings of your fellow-citizens ; though the glory of your virtues will not terminate with your military command, but will descend to remotest ages.’

“ Which was the most splendid spectacle ever witnessed ;—the opening feast of Prince George in London, or the resignation of Washington ? Which is the noble character for after ages to admire ;—yon fribble dancing in lace and spangles, or yonder hero who sheathes his sword after a life of spotless honour, a purity unapproached, a courage indomitable, and a consummate victory ? Which of these is the true gentleman ? What is it to be a gentleman ? Is it to have lofty aims, to lead a pure life, to keep your honour virgin ; to have the esteem of your fellow-citizens, and the love of your fireside ; to bear good fortune meekly ; to suffer evil with constancy ; and through evil or good



to maintain truth always? Show me the happy man whose life exhibits these qualities, and him we will salute as gentleman, whatever his rank may be; show me the prince who possesses them, and he may be sure of our love and loyalty."<sup>1</sup>

Millions of grateful hearts must, indeed, have cried "Merry Christmas" to the simple horseman who next day, unattended, started, a plain Virginia cavalier, on his way back to Mount Vernon.

<sup>1</sup> Thackeray, *Four Georges*, p. 114—The exact words of Washington are taken as found in his "Farewell Address," Appendix, Lodge's *Story of the Revolution*; W. C. Ford, vol. x, p. 338.

## CHAPTER XIX

### BIRTH OF THE CONSTITUTION

THE beautiful scene enacted at Annapolis, when Washington, with all the dignity of a simple citizen, surrendered his sword into the hands of the Continental Congress, and retired to Mount Vernon to spend his first Christmas in eight years at home, seemed to all to mark the beginning of a gracious and benign era of peace and happiness, quiet and plenty for the worn-out soldiers, settling of long-delayed accounts between debtor and creditor, peopling of the seas with white sails busily conveying the products of the soil to all lands, opening of vast stretches of Western water and wilderness to crowding immigration, and a general outburst of prosperity on the borders, and in the bosom, of the thirteen newly emancipated sovereignties. Scholars eagerly read their Virgils, and recalled the eloquent lines in which "*Saturnia regna*" were to return, and a Golden Age spread itself over regions where only stone and bronze and iron—alas, too often blood-stained—had hitherto been the symbols and the implements of a rude and confused civilisation.

" 'We have been subdued, it is true,' said an English Statesman, 'but, thank Heaven, the brain and the muscle which achieved the victory were nurtured by

English blood; Old England, upon the Island of Great Britain, has been beaten only by Young England, in America.' ” <sup>1</sup>

The vanquished party in the great international conflict might well take this unction to its soul, but little did even it know at that time of the vast geographical problems involved in the Treaty of Paris. A far-seeing Spaniard, however, lifted the veil and revealed to his sovereign the true situation:

“ This territory the French government was very unwilling to leave in American hands. The possibility of enormous expansion which it would afford to the new nation was distinctly foreseen by sagacious men. Count Aranda, the representative of Spain in these negotiations, wrote a letter to his king just after the treaty was concluded, in which he uttered this notable prophecy: ‘ This federal republic is born a pigmy. A day will come when it will be a giant, even a colossus, formidable in these countries. Liberty of conscience, the facility for establishing a new population on immense lands, as well as the advantages of the new government, will draw thither farmers and artisans from all the nations. In a few years we shall watch with grief, the tyrannical existence of this same colossus.’ The letter went on to predict that the Americans would presently get possession of Florida and attack Mexico.” <sup>2</sup>

This region of the “ rainbow gold ” was, indeed, a region to which vast territorial possibilities hung,

<sup>1</sup> Lossing, *Field Book of the Revolution*, Preface.

<sup>2</sup> Fiske, *Critical Period of American History*, p. 19.

not as the fabled gold glimmers and then vanishes from the end of the rainbow never to reappear, but a region of solid gold, of boundless wealth, of resources beyond the calculation of any arithmetic then available, of great and shining streams sweeping to a central river, soon to swarm with flat-boat and barge and raft and steamboat, driving out the primitive *bateau* and canoe of the trapper and the Indian; of plains sweeping like grassy seas down the winding rivers, and filled with herds of buffaloes; of forests rich in every species of vegetation, of fauna and flora known to the dreaming scientists of Europe, and in many things that had never entered into their wildest dreams; and beyond the central river, a land full of mountains, fairy-like in their beauty, seamed with silver and gold, full of prehistoric remains, alive with antelope and coyote, with big game and marvellous peaks, lakes and geysers. Through this mighty region, roamed scattered bands of Cherokees and Chickasaws and the painted population of the Six Nations, numerous and unstable as the bears and wolves and vultures that haunted thicket and undergrowth, ready to pounce upon the hated white man without a moment's notice.

Here, even while the bloody War of Independence was raging along the Atlantic line, another war was raging, thinner, paler perhaps, but no less fierce and passionate, almost elemental in its fury, presenting the curious spectacle of one war behind another. In the East, along the extended

coast-line, the British encircled the colonies with a host of ships and red-coats, threatening death and destruction to Washington and his generals. In the West, the Red Indian, the treacherous Tory, the disaffected tradesman, the mongrel half-breed of no discernible nationality but ravenous for plunder, skulked around the Great Lakes, the headwaters of the Ohio, the Tennessee, and the Holston, rendering night hideous with whoop and yell, and day crimson with scalping-knife and tomahawk.

Into this region entered a young Virginian, twenty-five years of age, commissioned by Patrick Henry, Governor of Virginia, and accompanied by 170 or 180 riflemen clad in buckskin. George Rogers Clark had been given full powers, in 1778, to invade and overrun this Terra Incognita, back up the English confederacy with the Indians, placate the French communities scattered here and there in the region of the Illinois, and capture or dismantle the forts at Kaskaskia and Vincennes.

After incredible exertions, recalling those of Benedict Arnold in his famous march on Quebec through the wilds of Maine, Clark accomplished all this, marched hundreds of miles through a flooded wilderness, took Hamilton and Rocheblave, the English and French commanders, prisoners, and sent them off to Virginia; thus, in a single wonderful campaign, with only two hundred men and "a spark of genius and imagination in his brain," conquering for his country the immense Northwestern

Territory out of which, later, five empire-like States were carved.

“The victory was complete. It was a very shining and splendid feat of arms. In the dead of winter, with a large part of his force composed of men of doubtful loyalty and of another race, Clark had marched across two hundred and forty miles of flooded wilderness. With no arms but rifles, he had taken a heavily stockaded fort, defended by artillery and garrisoned by regular troops under the command of a brave and capable soldier. The victory was not only complete, but final. Clark had broken the English campaign in the West; he had shattered their Indian confederacy, and wrested from them a region larger than most European kingdoms. He had opened the way, never to be closed again, to the advance of the American pioneers, the vanguard of the American people in their march across the continent. When the treaty of peace was made at Paris, the boundary of the United States went to the Lakes on the North, and to the Mississippi on the West, and that it did so was due to Clark and his riflemen. It was one of the sad questions, of which history offers so many, why the conqueror of Vincennes never reached again the heights of achievement which he attained in the first flush of manhood. But, whatever the answer may be, the great deed that he did was one of the glories of the Revolution which can never be dimmed, and which finds its lasting monument in the vast country then wrested from the British crown by American riflemen, inspired by the brilliant leadership of George Rogers Clark.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lodge, *The Story of the Revolution*, p. 352,

The achievement met with an enthusiastic reception from Patrick Henry, who communicated the event to the Virginia legislature:

“Williamsburg, November 14, 1778.

“Gentlemen,—The executive power of this state having been impressed with a strong apprehension of incursions on the frontier settlements from the savages situated about the Illinois, and supposing the danger would be greatly obviated by an enterprise against the English forts and possessions in that country, which were well known to inspire the savages with their bloody purposes against us, sent a detachment of militia, consisting of one hundred and seventy or eighty men commanded by Colonel George Rogers Clark, on that service some time last spring. By dispatches which I have just received from Colonel Clark, it appears that his success has equalled the most sanguine expectations. He has not only reduced Fort Chartres and its dependencies, but has struck such a terror into the Indian tribes between that settlement and the lakes that no less than five of them, *viz.*, the Puans, Sacks, Renards, Powtowantanes, and Miamis, who had received the hatchet from the English emissaries, have submitted to our arms all their English presents, and bound themselves by treaties and promises to be peaceful in the future.

“The great Blackbird, the Chappowow chief, has also sent a belt of peace to Colonel Clark, influenced, he supposes, by the dread of Detroit’s being reduced by Americans’ arms. This latter place, according to Colonel Clark’s representation, is at present defended by so inconsiderable a garrison and so scantily furnished with provisions, for which they must be still

more distressed by the loss of supplies from the Illinois, that it might be reduced by any number of men above five hundred. The governor of that place, Mr. Hamilton, was exerting himself to engage the savages to assist him in retaking the places that had fallen into our hands; but the favorable impression made on the Indians in general in that quarter, the influence of the French on them, and the reenforcement of their militia Colonel Clark expected, flattered him that there was little danger to be apprehended. . . . If the party under Colonel Clark can cooperate in any respect with the measures Congress are pursuing or have in view, I shall with pleasure give him the necessary orders. In order to improve and secure the advantages gained by Colonel Clark, I propose to support him with a reenforcement of militia. But this will depend on the pleasure of the assembly, to whose consideration the measure is submitted.

“The French inhabitants have manifested great zeal and attachment to our cause, and insist on garrisons remaining with them under Colonel Clark. This I am induced to agree to, because the safety of our own frontiers as well as that of these people demands a compliance with this request. Were it possible to secure the St. Lawrence and prevent the English attempts up that river by seizing some post on it, peace with the Indians would seem to me to be secured.

“With great regard I have the honor to be, Gent.,

“Your most obedient Servant,

“P. HENRY.”<sup>1</sup>

Thus was the Great West saved to the United States.

<sup>1</sup> Tyler, *Patrick Henry*, p. 230.



But peaceful and glorious as all things now seemed to the Americans, the situation was still fraught with perils. Washington, himself, strikes the keynote of it when in January, 1784, he writes to Benjamin Harrison :

“ At Mount Vernon.

“ The disinclination of the individual States to yield competent powers to Congress for the federal government, their unreasonable jealousy of that body and of one another, and the disposition, which seems to pervade each, of being all-wise and all-powerful within itself, will, if there is not a change in the system, be our downfall as a nation.”

This bitter thought marred for him the serenity of Mount Vernon and its expected happiness, which he thus describes to the Marquis LaFayette :

“ At Mount Vernon.

“ At length, my dear Marquis, I am become a private citizen on the banks of the Potomac ; and under the shadow of my own vine and my own fig-tree, free from the bustle of a camp, and the busy scenes of public life, I am solacing myself with those tranquil enjoyments, of which the soldier who is ever in pursuit of fame, the statesman, whose watchful days and sleepless nights are spent in devising schemes to promote the welfare of his own, perhaps the ruin of other countries, as if this globe was insufficient for us all, and the courtier, who is always watching the countenance of his prince, in hopes of catching a gracious smile, can have very little conception.”

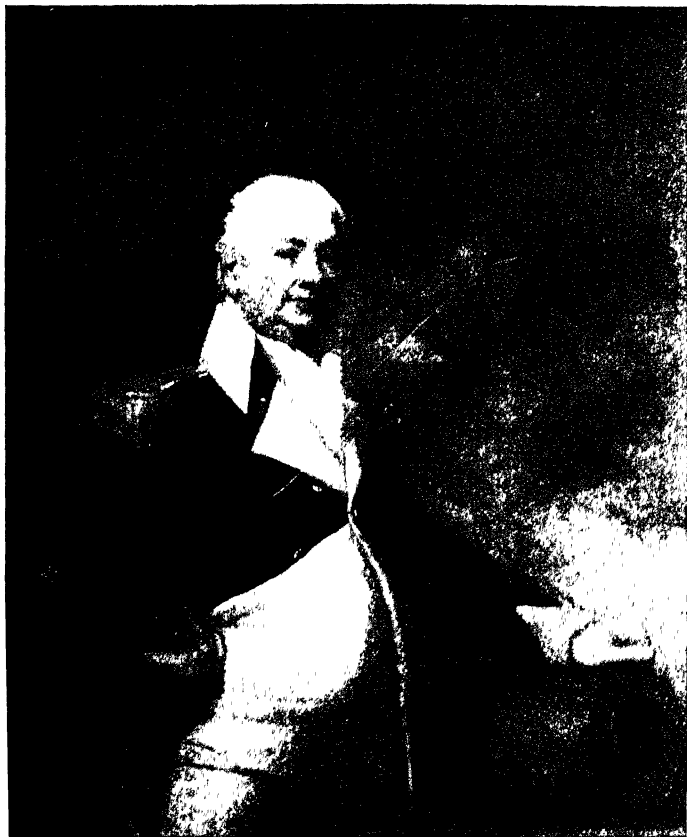
Old habits pursued him amid his agricultural avocations, as he thus observes to General Knox :

“I am just beginning to experience that ease and freedom from public cares, which, however desirable, takes some time to realize ; for, strange as it may seem, it is nevertheless true, that it was not till lately I could get the better of my usual custom of ruminating, as soon as I waked in the morning, on the business of the ensuing day ; and of my surprise at finding, after revolving many things in my mind, that I was no longer a public man, nor had anything to do with public transactions.”

An eminent foreigner seeing him at this time, apparently nothing more than a fine old Virginia gentleman, writes thus to Rayneval :

“The estate of General Washington not being more than fifteen leagues from Annapolis I accepted an invitation that he gave me to go and pass several days there, and it is from his house that I have the honor to write to you. After having seen him on my arrival in this continent, in the midst of his camp and in the tumult of arms, I have the pleasure to see him a simple citizen, enjoying in the repose of his retreat the glory which he has so justly acquired. . . . He dresses in a gray coat like a Virginia farmer, and nothing about him recalls the recollection of the important part which he has played except the great number of foreigners who come to see him.”

Even the venerable order of Masons took part in this simple life, and elected him an honorary member of Lodge No. 39, at Alexandria, the same



MAJOR-GENERAL HENRY KNOX.

From the painting by Gilbert Stuart, in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.



year. His architectural instincts, too, awoke vividly, and he began to plan extensions and improvements to his beautifully situated mansion.

“ At this time Washington was engaged in the prosecution of improvements at Mount Vernon, the principal being additions to the house originally built by Lawrence Washington (1744), which was of the old gable-roofed style, with only four rooms upon each floor. It was about one-third the size of the present building, and in the alteration it was made to occupy the central portion, the two ends having been built at the same time. The mansion, when completed by General Washington, at the close of 1785 (and as it now appears), was of the most substantial framework, two stories in height, ninety-six feet in length, thirty feet in depth, with a piazza fifteen feet in width, extending along the eastern or river front.”<sup>1</sup>

It was difficult, of course, for so active a mind to settle down at once from the cares of command, the thousand anxieties and occupations of the camp, and the multitudinous correspondence with Congress, pursued through so many years, and the thirty-seven volumes of his military and private letters, now in the archives at Washington, often attest the actual hardships of the “ peaceful ” life. A delightful visit or two from LaFayette in 1784, and the warm public congratulations of his native State; touring around among his estates in Virginia, and the wilds of Pennsylvania rendered memorable by Braddock’s

<sup>1</sup> Baker, *Washington after the Revolution*, vol. ii, p. 9-10.

defeat, during which he waged war on "squatters" on his lands; horseback journeys for hundreds of miles to view and review lands new and old—Washington always had an eye remarkably keen for "bottom" lands; visits from Englishmen and foreigners of all descriptions, varied the idyllic life of the statesman, but did not quell his uneasy fears as to the future of his country.

An honest Briton, dropping in accidentally at the hospitable mansion about this time, leaves an interesting picture of General and Mrs. Washington:

"I crossed the river from Maryland into Virginia, near to the renowned General Washington's, where I had the honour to spend some time, and was kindly entertained with that worthy family. As to the General, if we may judge by the countenance, he is what the world says of him, a shrewd, good-natured, plain, humane man, about fifty-five years of age, and seems to wear well, being healthful and active, straight, well made, and about six feet high. He keeps a good table, which is always open to those of a genteel appearance. He does not use many Frenchified *congees*, or flattering useless words without meaning, which savours more of deceit than an honest heart; but on the contrary, his words seem to point at truth and reason, and to spring from the fountain of a heart, which being good of itself, cannot be suspicious of others, till facts unriddle designs, which evidently appeared to me by a long tale that he told me about Arnold's manœuvres, far-fetched schemes, and deep-laid designs, to give him and his army up, above a month before the affair happened;

and though he said he wondered at many things that he observed in Arnold's conduct, yet he had not the least suspicion of any treachery going on, till the thing happened, and then he could trace back and see through his intentions from the beginning; which, from the General's behaviour to him, I am well apprized, seems to be the highest sin of ingratitude that a man could be guilty of.

"The General's house is rather warm, snug, convenient, and useful, than ornamental. The size is what ought to suit a man of about two or three thousand a year in England. The out-offices are good, and seem to be not long built; and he was making more offices at each wing to the front of the house which added more to ornament than real use. The situation is high, and commands a beautiful prospect of the river which parts Virginia and Maryland, but in other respects the situation seems to be out of the world, being chiefly surrounded by woods, and far from any great road or thoroughfare, and nine miles from Alexandria in Virginia. The General's lady is a hearty, comely, discreet, affable woman, some few years older than himself; she was a widow when he married her. He has no children by her. The General's house is open to poor travellers as well as rich; he gives diet and lodging to all that come that way, which indeed cannot be many, without they go out of their way on purpose. . . .

"I have travelled and seen a great deal of the world, have conversed with all degrees of people, and have remarked that there are only two persons in the world which have every one's good word, and those are—the Queen of England and General Washing-

ton, which I never heard friend or foe speak slightly of.”<sup>1</sup>

Difficulties of language made no difficulty to admiring foreigners, who occasionally addressed Washington in an idiom all their own. Thus, one of the minor German potentates writes at this time:

“MY GENERAL AND MY HERO.—I have just received your picture, and I am entirely taken up to give it a sufficient embellishment by placing it between the King of Prussia and his illustrious brother Henry. You see that this is a trio very harmonical. . . . It must be that the picture resembles, for I regard it as the greatest ornament of my fortress.”

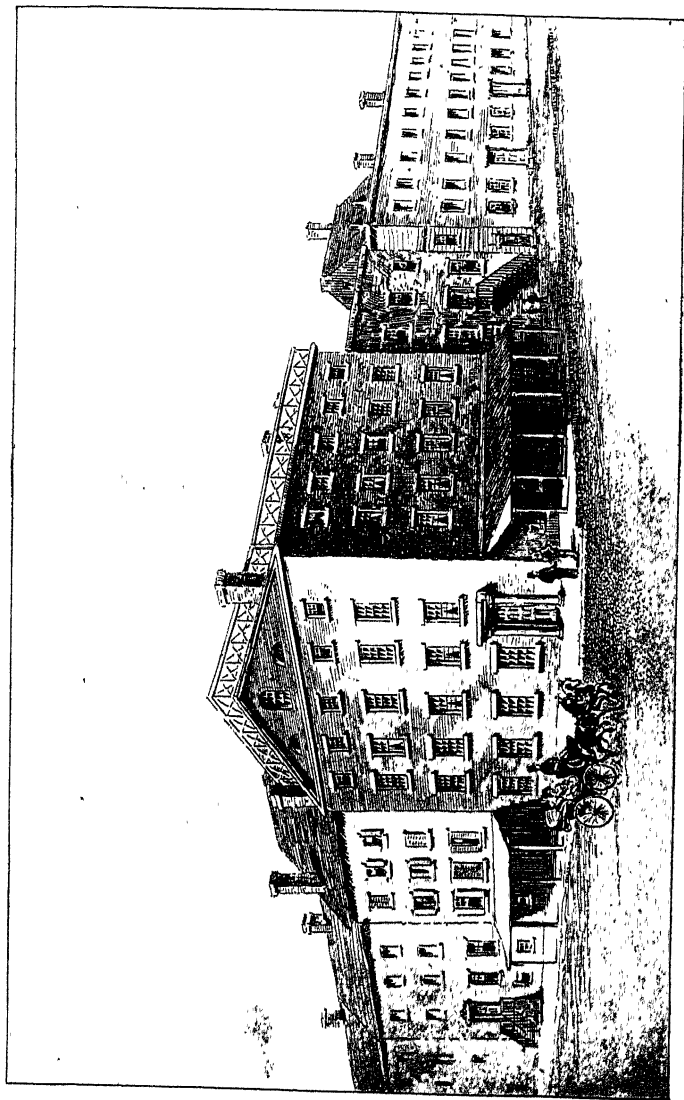
A charming trait of the General's solicitude for his guests crops out in the writings of a traveller and diarist of the times:

“I had feasted my imagination for several days in the near prospect of a visit to Mount Vernon, the seat of Washington. No pilgrim ever approached Mecca with deeper enthusiasm. I arrived there, in the afternoon of January 23d [?] '85. . . . I found him at table with Mrs. Washington and his private family, and was received in the native dignity and with that urbanity so peculiarly combined in the character of a soldier and eminent private gentleman. He soon put me at ease, by unbending in a free and affable conversation. . . .

“The first evening I spent under the wing of his hospitality, we sat a full hour at table by ourselves,

<sup>1</sup> Varlo, *Floating Ideas of Nature, suited to the Philosopher, Farmer, and Mechanic*.—Published in London, in 1796.





FRAUNCES'S TAVERN,  
From an old print.



without the least interruption, after the family had retired. I was extremely oppressed by a severe cold and excessive coughing, contracted by the exposure of a harsh winter journey. He pressed me to use some remedies, but I declined doing so. As usual after retiring, my coughing increased. When some time had elapsed, the door of my room was gently opened, and on drawing my bed-curtains, to my utter astonishment, I beheld Washington himself, standing at my bed-side, with a bowl of hot tea in his hand.”<sup>1</sup>

Washington, standing with a cup of hot tea in his hand at the bedside of a suffering guest, is a pleasant pendant to the Washington of the serpentine walks, the fragrant shrubberies, the old-fashioned climbing roses, and tree-planting instincts, who beautified the old-world gardens of Mount Vernon, stocked its parks with deer, enriched the neighbourhood with a fine breed of French stag-hounds, and bred “burros” from “Jacks and Jennies” presented by his most Catholic Majesty, the King of Spain.

“Gliding gently down the stream of life” as he might, in his oft-repeated phrase, consider himself to be, the gently-flowing stream, however, was still to be interrupted by many a sudden twist and turn, perilous fall, and world of troubled waters. The first intimation of it occurs in his oft-returning dread of a dissolving Union, now that the main object of that Union, Independence, had been achieved, and the sovereignty of each individual

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs of Elkanah Watson.*

State began, with implacable obstinacy, to assert itself.

Here, precisely as, in the Germany and the Italy of our day and of all days, Prussian contended with Bavarian, Hanoverian with Prussian and Saxon, and Würtemberger with Rhinelander, Tuscan with Roman, so in "the brave old days of '76," the men of Connecticut and the men of New York, the burghers of Jersey and the Quakers of Pennsylvania, the Puritans of Massachusetts and the cavaliers of Virginia and Maryland began, after Yorktown, to eye each other with mutual jealousy and distrust; odious nicknames were freely flung by one section at another; unbounded and, it may be added, unfounded claims began to be set up by Eastern States to the millions of fertile acres of the unexplored West; the disbanded armies of the Revolution, turned loose and now foot-free, began to demand more pay for their unrequited services, band together, and excite insurrection; retaliatory duties between the States were in danger of being enacted if not actually begun, "free trade" States and "tariff" States were about to spring into existence, and plague, pestilence, and famine were threatened.

Indeed, the few years from the Treaty of Paris to the adoption of the Federal Constitution, in 1788, were the most critical in the whole history of American Independence.

Affairs at this juncture are graphically depicted by a recent historian:

“The open contempt with which, in all parts of the country, the people treated the recommendation of Congress concerning the refugees and the payment of the debts, was no more than any man of ordinary sagacity could have foretold. Indeed, the state into which Congress had fallen was most wretched. Rudely formed amid the agonies of a revolution, the Confederation had never been revised and brought nearer to perfection in a season of tranquillity. Each of the thirteen States the Union bound together retained all the rights of sovereignty, and asserted them punctiliously against the central government. Each reserved to itself the right to put up mints, to strike money, to levy taxes, to raise armies, to say what articles should come into its ports free and what should be made to pay duty. Toward the Continental Government they acted precisely as if they were dealing with a foreign power. In truth, one of the truest patriots of New England had not been ashamed to stand up in his place in the Massachusetts House of Deputies and speak of the Congress of the States as a foreign government. Every act of that body was scrutinized with the utmost care. The transfer of the most trivial authority beyond the borders of the State was made with protestations, with trembling, and with fear. Under such circumstances, each delegate felt himself to have much the character, and to be clothed with very much of the power, of ambassadors. He was not responsible to men, he was responsible to a State. The opinions which he expressed, the measures which he advanced, were not those of a great party, nor even such as found favor among the men of his own district or of his own town. They were such as he

believed to be in accordance with the will of a majority of the members of that Legislature which had sent him to the post he filled. To him the smallest interest of the little patch of earth he called his native State was of far more importance than the greatest interest of the Confederation of States.”<sup>1</sup>

The distractions of the times were further enhanced by the rude treatment of the Tories, 100,000 of whom, it is reckoned, were driven out of the country between 1783 and 1785, despite the most solemn treaty obligation. Repudiation of the \$170,000,000, which Jefferson calculated the war had cost, was threatened. Whole neighbourhoods were depopulated by the disfranchisement of loyalists. A war of pamphlets, sermons, broadsides, newspaper scurrilities, under the leadership of classically named “Phocians,” “Brutuses,” and “Mentors,” fired the colonial empire from one end to the other. Private obligations and public covenants, international law—“that refuge of highwaymen and robbers,” as Voltaire called it—and municipal and State responsibilities were alike threatened. Shay’s Rebellion broke out in Massachusetts, in resistance to the weak federal authority, and, but for the timely energy and patriotism of General Lincoln and the men of Massachusetts, who crushed it mercilessly, would have swamped the Union or cleft it in pieces. “In a letter to Washington,

<sup>1</sup> McMaster, *History of the People of the United States*, vol. i, p. 130.

General Knox observes," says McMaster, "that no toasts were drunk in the army but 'A hoop to the barrel' and 'Cement to the Union.'"

A hoopless barrel, an uncemented Union, it seemed really to be.

Added to all this was the confusion worse confounded which reigned in the currency. Even when people were ready and willing to pay their just debts, it was almost impossible to do so, without a dictionary in many tongues at one's elbow, able to interpret the miscellaneous contents of the moth-eaten stockings which, in 1784, took the place of a natural and national currency. The antiquary of to-day would find the coins of the Revolution only in junk-shops, in out-of-the-way corners of museums, or in private cabinets, and would take curious delight in deciphering the blurred images and superscriptions on the golden "Joes," guineas, and moidores, the silver "bits," "pistareens," shillings, picayunes, and mill-dollars of the Spanish and New England coasts, and, above all, the comical "shin-plasters" and faded paper, telling in grandiloquent language how such and such a scrap of disreputable rag-money, marked with some strange device, was worth so-and-so in "Continental" currency. There were five different values to a "dollar," and as many to shillings. To this day, the mountain people of Virginia rudely reckon in shillings ( $16\frac{2}{3}$  cents), "nine-pences" ( $12\frac{1}{2}$ ), and "four-pences," and "bits" and "picayunes" form staples of cur-

rency in New Orleans and the Gulf States. Clipping and counterfeiting were rife.

Out of this anarchy of the counting-room, Gouverneur Morris drew the Union, by his organisation of the money system on its present decimal system of dimes and dollars.

At this point, critical enough in the history of the United States, the inland navigation scheme of Washington, Madison, and their friends—a scheme by which the waters of the Chesapeake, the Potomac, and the James were to be connected by canals with the territories of the West—came into prominence and, merely local at first, wrought itself into the favour first of Virginia and Maryland, then attracted the interest of Delaware, Pennsylvania, and New York, and at last, as recent historians like Fiske and McMaster have remarked, became the germ of the new Federal Union of 1787-88, and the true foundation of the United States as they exist to-day.

Washington, perhaps the best practical geographer of the time,—better even than Peter Jefferson, father of the President,—who had constructed a valuable map of Virginia, was thoroughly familiar by actual observation with most of this Western country, and seeing it filling up rapidly as “Ohio,” “Kentucky,” “Franklin,” and other incipient States, with a tide of immigration from the East, recognised the necessity of the vast scheme of internal communication, later realised in the James River and Kanawha Canal, the Chesapeake and Ohio



Canal, the National Road from Cumberland to Jefferson City, and other connecting schemes.

His alert mind was again turned at this time to a plan for draining and reclaiming the Dismal Swamp; but it was the Potomac scheme, with the regulation of the trade relations between Maryland and Virginia, which drew him to bring the matter before the Virginia legislature, and induce it to arrange a commercial convention with Maryland, to meet at Annapolis.

“TO RICHARD HENRY LEE

“The Assemblies of Virginia and Maryland have now under consideration the extension of the inland navigation of the rivers Potomac and James, and opening a communication between them and the western waters. They seem fully impressed with the political as well as the commercial advantages, which would result from the accomplishment of these great objects, and I hope will embrace the present moment to put them in a train for execution.”

To LaFayette he wrote as follows:

“I am here since December 20 with General Gates, at the request of the Assembly of Virginia to fix matters with the Assembly of this State respecting the extension of the inland navigation of the Potomac, and the communication between it and the western waters.”

Madison eagerly seconded Washington's plan and, two years later, matters came to a head.

“The commissioners, after preparing the terms of a compact between Virginia and Maryland for the

jurisdiction over the waters of the Chesapeake Bay and the rivers that were common to both States; took up matters of general policy, and decided to recommend to the two States a uniformity of duties on imports, a uniformity of commercial regulations, and a uniformity of currency. From this resulted (January, 1786) a proposition from Virginia, that a convention from all the States should be held to regulate the restrictions on commerce for the whole, the commissioners to meet at Annapolis on the first Monday in September, 1786. The invitations to the States were made through the executive of Virginia, although Maryland had made (December, 1785) the first move in the matter.”<sup>1</sup>

The beneficent schemes of the ex-commander, in preparing to drain swamps and canalise rivers for the good of his people, may have reached the alert ear of Goethe, open to all contemporary impressions, and woven themselves with the complicated fabric of the second part of *Faust*. Be that as it may, the Convention soon to meet was a fixed fact, a fact more significant than any event which had yet occurred in America except the Declaration and achievement of Independence, the one supreme fact indeed by which the whole business was to be signed and sealed. Imminent enough was the danger that if passions ran high enough, a great State like Virginia, then numbering 700,000 inhabitants, might attack a small State like Delaware or Rhode Island (numbering only 70,000). North Carolina and its

<sup>1</sup> Baker, *Washington after the Revolution*, vol. ii, p. 27.

new-born child, the so-called State of "Franklin," were already at daggers drawn. The beautiful Vale of the Wyoming, celebrated in song and story, had already run crimson with the good blood of Pennsylvania and Connecticut; and New York and New Jersey, separated only by a streak of silver water, glared at each other over the chasm in a state of acute tariff exasperation.

It was indeed high time to call a halt, to dissolve the impotent "League of Friendship" as the first confederation was called, recombine it into a strong federal power on constitutional principles, and endow it with the strength necessary to govern firmly a great empire, threatening at any moment to go to pieces for lack of centralisation. A government, "one to-day, thirteen to-morrow," as one expressed it, could not continue on so unstable a foundation. Judge Marshall, the weightiest biographer of Washington, known as the great expounder of the Constitution, quotes LaFayette's anxious words to the General at this time:

"I wish," he added, "the other sentiments I have had occasion to discover with respect to America, were equally satisfactory with those that are personal to yourself. I need not say that the spirit, the firmness, with which the revolution was conducted, has excited universal admiration. . . . That every friend to the rights of mankind is an enthusiast for the principles on which those constitutions are built. . . . But I have often had the mortification to hear, that the want of powers in congress, of union between the States, of

energy in their government, would make the confederation very insignificant. By their conduct in the revolution, the citizens of America have commanded the respect of the world; but it grieves me to think they will in a measure lose it, unless they strengthen the confederation, give congress power to regulate their trade, pay off their debt, or at least the interest of it, establish a well regulated militia, and, in a word, complete all those measures which you have recommended to them."

"Unhappily for us," said the General in reply, "though the reports you mention are greatly exaggerated, our conduct has laid the foundation for them. It is one of the evils of democratic governments, that the people, not always seeing, and frequently misled, must often feel before they act right. But evils of this nature seldom fail to work their own cure. It is to be lamented nevertheless, that the remedies are so slow, and that those who wish to apply them seasonably, are not attended to before they suffer in person, in interest, and in reputation. I am not without hopes that matters will soon take a favourable turn in the federal constitution. The discerning part of the community have long since seen the necessity of giving adequate powers to congress for national purposes, and those of a different description must yield to it ere long."<sup>1</sup>

All these dangers, growing out of what Marshall calls "the miserably defective organization of the government," at last swept to a conclusion—the birth of the Republic, which Marshall in his weighty manner thus sketches:

<sup>1</sup> Marshall, *The Life of George Washington*, vol. v, p. 73.

“ Measures were taken in Virginia, which, though they originated in different views, terminated in a proposition for a general convention to revise the state of the union.

“ To form a compact relative to the navigation of the rivers Potomac and Pocomoke, and of part of the bay of Chesapeake, by the citizens of Virginia and Maryland, commissioners were appointed by the legislatures of those states respectively, who assembled at Alexandria in March, 1785. While at Mount Vernon on a visit, they agreed to propose to their respective governments, the appointment of other commissioners, with power to make conjoint arrangements, to which the assent of congress was to be solicited, for maintaining a naval force in the Chesapeake. The commissioners were also to be empowered to establish a tariff of duties on imports, to which the laws of both states should conform. When these propositions received the assent of the legislature of Virginia, an additional resolution was passed, directing that which respected the duties on imports to be communicated to all the states in the union, who were invited to send deputies to the meeting.

“ On the 21st of January, 1786, a few days after the passage of these resolutions, another was adopted appointing certain commissioners, who were to meet such as might be appointed by the other states in the union, at a time and place to be agreed on, to take into consideration the trade of the United States; to examine the relative situation and trade of the said states; to consider how far a uniform system in their commercial relations may be necessary to their common interest, and their permanent harmony; and to

report to the several states such an act relative to this great object, as when unanimously ratified by them, will enable the United States in congress assembled effectually to provide for the same.”<sup>1</sup>

The committee met and five States sent commissioners, among whom was Washington from Virginia. Questions of such import to the whole country developed at the minor convention, that it was determined to convene a general body to revise the entire Federal system. The place set was Philadelphia, the time, May 2, 1787. The delegates were to be appointed by the State legislature:

Madison says:

“It has been thought advisable to give this subject a very solemn dress, and all the weight which could be derived from a single state. This idea will also be pursued in the selection of characters to represent Virginia in the federal convention. You will infer our earnestness on this point, from the liberty which will be used of placing your name at the head of them. How far this liberty may correspond with the ideas by which you ought to be governed, will be best decided where it must ultimately be decided. In every event it will assist powerfully in marking the zeal of our legislature, and its opinion of the magnitude of the occasion.”

“Although,” said the General in reply, “I have bid a public adieu to the public walks of life, and had resolved never more to tread that theatre; yet, if upon an occasion so interesting to the well being of the

<sup>1</sup> Marshall, *The Life of George Washington*, vol. v, p. 91.

confederacy, it had been the wish of the assembly that I should be an associate in the business of revising the federal system, I should from a sense of the obligation I am under for repeated proofs of confidence in me, more than from any opinion I could entertain of my usefulness, have obeyed its call; but it is now out of my power to do this with any degree of consistency . . . the cause I will mention.

"I presume you heard sir, that I was first appointed, and have since been rechosen president of the society of the Cincinnati; and you may have understood also, that the triennial general meeting of this body is to be held in Philadelphia the first monday in May next. Some particular reasons combining with the peculiar situation of my private concerns, the necessity of paying attention to them, a wish for retirement and relaxation from public cares, and rheumatic pains which I begin to feel very sensibly, induced me on the 31st ultimo, to address a circular letter to each state society, informing them of my intention not to be at the next meeting, and of my desire not to be rechosen president. The vice-president is also informed of this, that the business of the society may not be impeded by my absence. Under these circumstances, it will readily be perceived that I could not appear at the same time and place on any other occasion, without giving offence to a very respectable and deserving part of the community . . . the late officers of the American army."<sup>1</sup>

Jay, Hamilton, Governor Randolph of Virginia besieged Washington with letters, entreating him

<sup>1</sup> Marshall, *The Life of George Washington*, vol. v, p. 98.

to accept his unanimous election as head of the Virginia delegation, "the last hope of the Union," says Marshall, "summoned by the united voice of a continent" again to save his country.

Washington had almost literally to be dragged from his retirement at Mount Vernon, put on horseback—sent to Philadelphia, where as the representative of federalism he was to play a most impressive part during the four and a half months' service of the Convention. He was himself the living incarnation of the principles enunciated in his remarkable Circular Letter to the governors of the States, when he laid down his sword, strong for federal authority, for the observance of all debt obligations, foreign and domestic, for the sanctity of treaties, for the necessity of well-defined executive, judiciary, and legislative functions under republican forms of government.

Many of the eminent luminaries of the law and of learning were already among the ninety-one members of the Federal Congress which had now continuously been in session for nearly a decade; but enough remained to constitute one of the most remarkable bodies ever assembled to discuss matters of the last importance to the existence of a State. Among these were Washington (Jefferson was in France), Madison, Rufus King, Roger Sherman, Alexander Hamilton, Livingston, Franklin, Robert Morris, Mifflin, Gouverneur Morris, John Dickinson, Daniel Carroll, George Mason, Governor Randolph, Williamson (of North Car-



olina), Rutledge, the two Pinckneys, and Pierce Butler.

By unanimous decision, Washington was escorted to the chair. The members were bound over to absolute secrecy; but James Madison kept a full private journal of the proceedings, and this, published nearly fifty years after the assembling of the Convention, sheds intensely interesting light on the genesis of the original seven articles of the Constitution, as this Convention framed them. Other members (C. Pinckney, Rufus King, W. Pierce, and Robert Yates) kept imperfect journals of the events of the meeting, one of them particularly rich in pen-pictures of the members; but Madison's explicit work takes the palm for fulness and accuracy, and reveals the future President's profound influence in moulding the great but simple outlines on which the Constitution was built.

Washington, as might be expected, scrupulously observing the injunction to secrecy, as copious as he usually is in his printed journals on all important matters pertaining to his life, lets hardly a word fall about the doings of the meeting.

The extreme importance which Madison himself attached to his Notes may be gathered from a clause in his will:

"Considering the peculiarity and magnitude of the occasion which produced the Convention at Philadelphia in 1787, the Characters who composed it, the Constitution which resulted from their deliberations, its effects during a trial of so many years on the pros-

perity of the people living under it, and the interest it has inspired among the friends of free Government, it is not an unreasonable inference that a careful and extended report of the proceedings and discussions of that body, which were with closed doors, by a member who was constant in his attendance, will be particularly gratifying to the people of the United States, and to all who take an interest in the progress of political science and the course of true liberty. It is my desire that the Report as made by me should be published under her [Mrs. Madison's] authority and direction."<sup>1</sup>

The good old city of Philadelphia had never seen a more striking group of statesmen gathered in its broad, straight streets, and pleasant colonial mansions, than during the long, hot summer of 1787. Every question connected with the formation of a representative plan of government, republican or monarchical, despotic or free; every question that human ingenuity, re-enforced by suspicion, caution, or the example of past ages, connected with executive, judiciary, or legislative branches of government; bases of popular representation, proportional representation, veto power, war powers, treaty powers, balance of powers between the triangle of President, Supreme Court, and Congress; even the age of representatives, (twenty-five,) of senators, (thirty,) and of presidents, (thirty-five,) were entered into with a zest and infinity of detail which fixed, once and for ever, the profile outline of a vast

<sup>1</sup> *Writings of James Madison*, vol. iii, p. xi.

picture, afterwards to be filled out by the wisdom of succeeding generations, nor were currency questions or a National University forgotten.

Slowly "the federal pyramid" (as one of the members strikingly called it) emerged from the seething waters of the "Virginia Plan," the "South Carolina Plan," and the visionary schemes and plans of members who abhorred "the fetish of monarchy," and shrank, with Franklin, "from the natural inclination which all have for kingly government"; and when, at last, the 17th of September rolled around, the venerable philosopher, now in his eighty-third year, rose in his place and, through his friend Wilson, read a paper so full of good sense and picturesque humour on the compromise nature of all such epoch-making documents as the Constitution, that all signed it except two or three delegates, including Mason and Randolph of Virginia.

"MR. PRESIDENT:

"I confess that there are several parts of this constitution which I do not at present approve, but I am not sure I shall never approve them: For having lived long, I have experienced many instances of being obliged by better information or fuller consideration, to change opinions even on important subjects, which I once thought right, but found to be otherwise. It is therefore that the older I grow, the more apt I am to doubt my own judgment, and to pay more respect to the judgment of others. Most men indeed as well as most sects in Religion think themselves in pos-

session of all truth, and that wherever others differ from them it is so far error. Steele a Protestant in a Dedication tells the Pope, that the only difference between our Churches in their opinions of the certainty of their doctrines is, the Church of Rome is infallible and the Church of England is never in the wrong. But though many private persons think almost as highly of their own infallibility as of that of their sect, few express it so naturally as a certain French lady, who in a dispute with her sister, said 'I don't know how it happens, Sister, but I meet with nobody but myself, that is always in the right—*Il n'y a que moi qui ai toujours raison.*'

"In these sentiments, Sir, I agree to this Constitution with all its faults, if they are such; because I think a general Government necessary for us, and there is no form of Government but what may be a blessing to the people if well administered, and believe farther that this is likely to be well administered for a course of years, and can only end in Despotism, as other forms have done before it, when the people shall become so corrupted as to need despotic Government, being incapable of any other. I doubt too whether any other Convention we can obtain may be able to make a better Constitution. For when you assemble a number of men to have the advantage of their joint wisdom, you inevitably assemble with those men, all their prejudices, their passions, their errors of opinion, their local interests, and their selfish views. From such an assembly can a perfect production be expected? It therefore astonishes me, Sir, to find this system approaching so near to perfection as it does; and I think it will astonish our enemies, who are wait-

ing with confidence to hear that our councils are confounded like those of the Builders of Babel; and that our States are on the point of separation, only to meet hereafter for the purpose of cutting one another's throats. Thus I consent, Sir, to this Constitution because I expect no better, and because I am not sure, that it is not the best. The opinions I have had of its errors, I sacrifice to the public good. I have never whispered a syllable of them abroad. Within these walls they were born, and here they shall die. If every one of us in returning to our Constituents were to report the objections he has had to it, and endeavor to gain partizans in support of them, we might prevent its being generally received, and thereby lose all the salutary effects and great advantages resulting naturally in our favor among foreign nations as well as among ourselves, from our real or apparent unanimity. Much of the strength and efficiency of any Government in procuring and securing happiness to the people, depends, on opinion, on the general opinion of the goodness of the Government as well as of the wisdom and integrity of its Governors. I hope therefore that for our own sakes as a part of the people, and for the sake of posterity, we shall act heartily and unanimously in recommending this Constitution (if approved by Congress and confirmed by the Conventions) wherever our influence may extend, and turn our future thoughts and endeavors to the means of having it well administered.

“ On the whole, Sir, I cannot help expressing a wish that every member of the Convention who may still have objections to it, would with me, on this occasion doubt a little of his own infallibility, and to make mani-

fest our unanimity, put his name to this instrument. . . .”<sup>1</sup>

The consent of nine States out of the thirteen was necessary for ratification, after the plan had acquired the consent of Congress.

Not many months had elapsed before all the States, some swiftly, others with apparent reluctance, wheeled into line, and one after another ratified the work of the Convention. In Virginia, the famous “fire-eater” and States’ Rights man, Patrick Henry, fought with the fury of a lion against it for twenty-three days in the Virginia Convention of 1788, and succeeded in dragging after him seventy-eight out of 168 delegates to that body.

Among those on the wrong side, as after-generations conceived it, were Patrick Henry, Benjamin Harrison, Judge John Tyler, Meriweather Smith, Stevens Thompson Mason, George Mason, Theoderick Bland, Grayson, Bullitt, James Monroe, and others.

Weighty names on the other side were Edmund Pendleton (president of the Convention), the Nicholases, A. Stuart, Paul Carrington, Warner Lewis, Governor Randolph, John Marshall, N. Burwell, R. Breckenridge, Thornton, Powell, James Madison, John Blair, George Wythe, and Bushrod Washington.

Two singularly interesting entries in Washington’s Diary at this time may well close the account of the “momentous work” done by the Convention:

<sup>1</sup> *Writings of James Madison*, vol. iv, p. 473.

“Met in Convention when the Constitution received the unanimous assent of 11 States and Col. Hamilton’s from New York (the only delegate from thence in Convention) and was subscribed to by every Member present except Gov. Randolph and Col. Mason from Virginia—and Mr. Gerry from Massachusetts.

“The business being thus closed, the Members adjourned to the City Tavern, dined together and took a cordial leave of each other—after which I returned to my lodgings—did some business with, and received the papers from the Secretary of the Convention, and retired to meditate on the momentous work which had been executed, after not less than five, for a large part of the time Six, and sometimes 7 hours sitting every day [except], sundays and the ten days adjournment to give a Com.<sup>1</sup> opportunity and time to arrange the business for more than four Months.”

“In all our deliberations on this subject we kept steadily in our view, that which appears to us the greatest interest of every true American, the consolidation of our Union, in which is involved our prosperity, felicity, safety, perhaps our national existence. This important consideration, seriously and deeply impressed on our minds, led each state in the Convention to be less rigid on points of inferior magnitude than might have been otherwise expected; and thus the Constitution, which we now present, is the result of a spirit of amity, and of that mutual deference and concession which the peculiarity of our political situation rendered indispensable.”

Through so many throes, was the birth of the Republic accomplished.

<sup>1</sup> Committee.

## CHAPTER XX

### “FIRST CITIZEN OF THE UNITED STATES”

THE “federal pyramid” having thus been firmly established, with its broad basis built on popular representation, and its apex crowned by a man of the people’s own choice, all eyes turned instinctively to the one who, in all these turmoils, had shown himself supremely well fitted for the position—to George Washington, “first citizen of the United States,” as a distinguished Frenchman of this time impressively called him.

The tired soldier, dreaming amid the sweet retirement of Mount Vernon of a tranquil existence passed among his golden wheat and pink-flowering tobacco fields, on the banks of the beautiful Potomac, longed for nothing more than to be let alone; but his high sense of duty, quickened by the consciousness of a work only half done, made him, after a while, lend a reluctant ear to the prayers of Alexander Hamilton, Hanson, LaFayette, and others.

“I take it for granted, Sir,” wrote Hamilton, “you have concluded to comply with what will, no doubt, be the general call of your country in relation to the new government. You will permit me to say, that it is indispensable you should lend yourself to its first oper-



ations. It is to little purpose to have introduced a system if the weightiest influence is not given to its firm establishment in the outset.”

He wrote to Samuel Hanson:

“The first wish of my soul is to spend the evening of my days as a private citizen on my farm; but, if circumstances, which are not yet sufficiently unfolded to form the judgment or the opinion of my friends, will not allow me this last boon of temporal happiness, and I should once more be led into the walks of public life, it is my fixed determination to enter there, not only unfettered by promises, but even unchargeable with creating or feeding the expectation of any living for my assistance to office.”

To LaFayette he expresses himself thus:

“Nothing but harmony, honesty, industry, and frugality are necessary to make us a great and happy people. Happily the present posture of affairs, and the prevailing disposition of my countrymen, promise to co-operate in establishing those four great and essential pillars of public felicity.”

Meanwhile, his own affairs had sorely suffered during his year-long absences; he actually had to borrow money to put them in order; and the death of his Spartan mother in August, 1788, at the ripe age of more than four-score years, caused a further pang to his suffering heart.

“Immediately after the organisation of the present government, the chief magistrate repaired to Fredericksburg, to pay his humble duty to his mother, pre-

paratory to his departure for New York. An affecting scene ensued. The son feelingly remarked the ravages which a torturing disease [cancer] had made upon the aged frame of the mother, and addressed her with these words: 'The people, madam, have been pleased, with the most flattering unanimity, to elect me to the chief magistracy of these United States, but before I can assume the functions of my office, I have come to bid you an affectionate farewell. So soon as the weight of public business, which must necessarily attend the outset of a new government, can be disposed of, I shall hasten to Virginia, and—' Here the matron interrupted with '—and you will see me no more; my great age, and the disease which is fast approaching my vitals, warn me that I shall not be long in this world; I trust in God that I may be somewhat prepared for a better. But go, George, fulfil the high destinies which Heaven appears to have intended you for; go, my son, and may that Heaven's and a mother's blessing be with you always.' ”<sup>1</sup>

In such leisurely fashion did the delegates assemble that March 4 became April 6, 1789, before the Congress, opening the electoral votes, found that every one of the sixty-nine ballots cast by the ten voting states (New York, North Carolina, and Rhode Island not voting) was cast for the great Virginian. John Adams received thirty-four votes and was installed as Vice-president.

Washington's own feelings are better imagined

<sup>1</sup> G. W. P. Custis, *Recollections and Private Memoirs of Washington*, p. 145.

than described. He wrote to General Knox after his election :

“In confidence I tell you, (with the world it would obtain little credit) that my movements to the chair of government will be accompanied by feelings not unlike those of a culprit, who is going to the place of his execution ; so unwilling am I, in the evening of a life nearly consumed in public cares, to quit a peaceful abode for an ocean of difficulties, without that competency of political skill, abilities, and inclination, which are necessary to manage the helm. I am sensible that I am embarking the voice of the people, and a good name of my own, on this voyage ; but what returns will be made for them, Heaven alone can foretell. Integrity and firmness are all I can promise.”

To his French friend, Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, he wrote :

“A combination of circumstances and events seems to have rendered my embarking again on the ocean of public affairs inevitable. How opposite this is to my own desires and inclinations, I need not say. Those who know me are, I trust, convinced of it. For the rectitude of my intentions I appeal to the great Searcher of hearts ; and if I have any knowledge of myself I can declare, that no prospects however flattering, no personal advantage however great, no desire of fame however easily it might be acquired, could induce me to quit the private walks of life at my age and in my situation ; but if, by any exertion or services of mine, my country can be benefited, I shall feel more amply compensated for the sacrifices which I make, than I possibly can be by any other means.”

In the spirit of true magnanimity, he laid aside all personal concerns, and accepted the high trust conferred on him by nearly four millions of people. His Diary gives a pathetic glimpse of his feelings:

“ April 15th.

“ About ten o'clock I bade adieu to Mount Vernon, to private life, and to domestic felicity, and with a mind oppressed with more anxious and painful sensations than I have words to express, set out for New York in company with Mr. Thomson and Col. Humphreys, with the best disposition to render service to my country in obedience to its calls, but with less hope of answering its expectations.”

No gay cavalier was this, prancing on restive steed to meet unknown responsibilities in far-distant New York, that April morning: it was a very solemn horseman, about whose neck was a chain, a chain of gold, woven of the thousand threads of a nation's gratitude, but still a chain. Very different, indeed, was this ride from that five years before, when he set out from Annapolis to spend the Christmas of 1783 at Mount Vernon. The symbolic April weather with all its changefulness was upon him, and he was hastening onward toward unknown and perhaps insurmountable difficulties.

The 30th of April drew nigh, and on that day in the good year 1789, “ the first Magistrate of the Union ” was inaugurated, as the expression came to be, President of the United States.

The simple ceremony was thus described by a contemporary :

“At nine o'clock A. M. the clergy of different denominations assembled their congregations in their respective places of worship, and offered up prayers for the safety of the President.

“About twelve o'clock the procession moved from the house of the president in Cherry Street, through Dock Street to Federal Hall [at Wall and Nassau Streets]: in the following order. Colonel [Morgan] Lewis supported by two officers, Capt. Stakes, with the troop of Horse-Artillery, Major Van Horne, Grenadiers, under Captain Harsin, German Grenadiers, under Capt. Scriba, Major Bicker, The Infantry of the Brigade, Major Chrystie, Sheriff [Robert Boyd], The Committee of the Senate, The President and suite. The Committee of the Representatives, The Honorable Mr. Jay, General Knox, Chancellor Livingston, and several other gentlemen of distinction. Then followed a multitude of citizens.

“When they came within a short distance of the Hall, the troops formed a line on both sides of the way, and his Excellency passing through the ranks, was conducted into the building, and in the Senate Chamber introduced to both houses of Congress—immediately afterwards, accompanied by the two houses, he went into the gallery fronting Broad-Street, where, in the presence of an immense concourse of citizens, he took the oath prescribed by the constitution, which was administered to him by the Hon. R. R. Livingston, Esq., Chancellor of the state of New York.

“Immediately after he had taken the oath, the Chancellor proclaimed him President of the United States.—Was answered by the discharge of 13 guns, and by loud repeated shouts; on this the President bowed

to the people, and the air again rang with their acclamations. His Excellency with the two houses, then retired to the Senate Chamber and delivered his speech.

“His excellency accompanied by the Vice-President, the Speaker of the House of Representatives [Frederick A. Muhlenberg] and both Houses of Congress went to St. Paul’s chapel [Broadway and Vesey Street] where divine Service was performed by Right Reverend Dr. [Samuel] Provost, Bishop of the Episcopal Church in this State and Chaplain in Congress. The religious ceremony being ended, the President was escorted to his house, and the citizens retired to their homes. In the evening was exhibited under the direction of Colonel Bauman, a very ingenious and splendid show of Fireworks.”

Washington gathered about him his tried and trusty friends, and formed them into a Cabinet which should guide him at this critical stage: Hamilton, Secretary of the Treasury, Jay (succeeded a few months later by Jefferson), Secretary of State, Knox, Secretary of War, Edmund Randolph (not so good a friend!), Attorney-General, and Samuel Osgood, Postmaster-General.

Always a trifle ceremonious, after the good old fashion of the true Virginia gentleman of the eighteenth century, the President found it necessary to establish certain little rules of observance and of etiquette, which should save him from the intolerable bores who thronged his ante-chamber and called “just to pay their respects.” Hours for public receptions, hours for Mrs. Washington’s



WASHINGTON MONUMENT.  
Looking across the "Flats."





levees, hours for the diplomats, state dinners, an established code for the President of receiving, but not returning, calls, the simplest ceremonial dress of the eighteenth century, and a certain stately simplicity of behaviour, characterised the beginnings of official life in the United States, as far as possible removed from the vice-regal splendour of the Spanish Courts in Mexico, the Antilles, and South America.

The soldier period of Washington's existence had passed away for ever, and he was now, at the age of fifty-seven, about to enter on that career of the statesman which has roused and held the lasting admiration of the world. Each period occupied eight years, and it would be difficult to give the palm to either for sustained and powerful evolution and growth. The natural born statesman with unerring instinct saw and seized the right measures for the infant State, recognised infallibly what was the right thing to do, and did it with an inflexibility which no flattery or persuasion could swerve from its purpose. Two measures, to his undying praise be it said, stand out big and luminous beyond all others, noble monuments to his wisdom and foresight: the establishment, as a fixed policy, of the absolute neutrality of the United States in all European entanglements, and the intellectual and moral alliance with Great Britain. The dear old mother-country had erred grievously in her behaviour towards her child, but Washington, forgiving but not forgetting, could not bring himself to break with her,

eminent as were the claims of France to his gratitude, when the French War came on in the nineties. He loved England too much to set himself against her, and this exceeding affection at last put Britain—reversing Scripture—into the position of the prodigal mother who, having spent her immeasurable wealth of colonies in riotous living, came to fall at the feet of her child and ask its pardon. ✓

These eight years of administration were of supreme importance to the Republic as “solidifiers,” as pattern years wherein broad foundations for future policies were laid, as years of precedent fraught with interest for the administrations to come. The era of “sovereign” States and suppliant congresses, of “leagues of friendship,” beguiled almost into dissolution by contempt of a central power and by presumptuous self-confidence, was temporarily over and the country was to rest for at least seventy years before the phantom of disintegration, trampling under foot Washington’s prayer for an “inviolable” and “indissoluble” Union, was to stalk abroad through the land.

The first Thanksgiving was celebrated in November, 1789; the first census was carried out in 1790. Very simple was the ceremonial at Washington’s receptions, as thus described by a contemporary:

“At three o’clock, or at any time within a quarter of an hour afterward, the visitor was conducted to the dining-room, from which all seats had been removed for the time. On entering, he saw the tall manly figure

of Washington clad in black velvet; his hair in full dress, powdered and gathered behind in a large silk bag; yellow gloves on his hands; holding a cocked hat with a cockade in it, and the edges adorned with a black feather about an inch deep. He wore knee and shoe buckles; and a long sword, with a finely wrought and polished steel hilt, which appeared at the left hip; the coat worn over the sword, so that the hilt, and the part below the coat behind, were in view. The scabbard was white polished leather. He stood always in front of the fire-place, with his face towards the door of entrance. The visitor was conducted to him, and he required to have the name so distinctly pronounced that he could hear it. He had the very uncommon faculty of associating a man's name, and personal appearance, so durably in his memory, as to be able to call one by name, who made him a second visit. He received his visitor with a dignified bow, while his hands were so disposed of as to indicate, that the salutation was not to be accompanied with shaking hands. This ceremony never occurred in these visits, even with his most near friends, that no distinction might be made.

“As visitors came in, they formed a circle around the room. At a quarter past three, the door was closed, and the circle was formed for that day. He then began on the right, and spoke to each visitor, calling him by name, and exchanging a few words with him. When he had completed his circuit, he resumed his first position, and the visitors approached him in succession, bowed and retired. By four o'clock this ceremony was over.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> William Sullivan, *Public Men of the Revolution*, p. 120.

The next Congress met at Philadelphia, which was to remain the Capital until 1800, when Congress met in the "Federal City" on the banks of the Potomac; this city was planned and laid out by the President, Major L'Enfant, Ellicott, and others, Washington himself laying the corner-stone of the Capitol with Masonic ceremonies. This district, ten miles square, has ever since been known as "The District of Columbia" and is the seat of the Federal Government.

Though possessing a constitution of iron, the President was twice very near death during the early years of his first administration, once from a malignant tumor, during which he lay for six weeks on his right side unable to sit up; the other time from inflammation of the lungs and debility.

During the former illness he watched the doctor closely, and uttered with placid firmness the simple touching words: "Do not flatter me with vain hopes; I am not afraid to die, and therefore can bear the worst. Whether to-night or twenty years hence makes no difference. I know that I am in the hands of a good Providence."

He instituted the custom of "touring the country" in the interests of good administration, beginning with New England, and continuing, later, with the Southern States, everywhere meeting an enthusiastic welcome.

At Boston occurred a ludicrous incident which dispelled for ever, so far as Washington was concerned, the delusion of "Sovereign" States, and

casts a gleam of grim humour over the serious countenance of the President. When he visited that city, the President was informed that John Hancock, Governor of Massachusetts, was sick in bed, too ill to pay his visit of ceremony. It was more than suspected that this was a mere “dodge,” to evade the responsibilities of the hour and the recognition of the President as the superior of the Governor of a State. Washington declined to visit the “indisposed” magistrate, who thereupon, in post-haste, had himself “borne in a litter, swathed in flannels” to the inflexible Chief, paid his respects, and then departed, doubtless meditating over the vicissitudes of fortune.

From over the water, from time to time, came strange visitors and stranger relics: the great key of the Bastille (destroyed in 1789), presented by La-Fayette; a fiery ode from the pen of Alfieri; sculptors and painters commemorating in marble or pigment their conception of the General. Peale, Trumbull, Houdon, Canova, Gilbert Stuart, caught the features and fixed the attitudes in which posterity now loves to study the outward character of the President. Chateaubriand and Charles James Fox uttered memorable words about him:

“The conversation turned almost entirely on the French revolution. The general showed us a key of the Bastille; those keys of the Bastille were but silly playthings which were about that time distributed over the two worlds. Had Washington seen like me the conquerors of the Bastille in the kennels of Paris, he

would have had less faith in the relic. The gravity and the energy of the revolution were not in those sanguinary orgies. At the time of the revocation of the edict of Nantes, in 1685, the same populace of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine demolished the Protestant church at Charenton with as much zeal as it despoiled the church of St. Denis in 1793.

“I left my host at ten in the evening, and never saw him again: he set out for the country the following day, and I continued my journey.

“Such was my interview with that man who gave liberty to a whole world. Washington sank into the tomb before any little celebrity had attached to my name. I passed before him as the most unknown of beings; he was in all his glory, I in the depth of my obscurity, my name probably dwelt not a whole day in his memory. Happy, however, that his looks were cast upon me! I have felt myself warmed for it all the rest of my life. There is a virtue in the looks of a great man.”<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Fox in the British Parliament in January, 1794, said:

“And here, Sir, I cannot help alluding to the President of the United States, General Washington, a character whose conduct has been so different from that which has been pursued by the ministers of this country. How infinitely wiser must appear the spirit and principles manifested in his late address to Congress than the policy of modern European courts! Illustrious man, deriving honour less from the splendour of his situation than from the dignity of his mind; be-

<sup>1</sup> Chateaubriand, *Travels in America and Italy*.

fore whom all borrowed greatness sinks into insignificance, and all the potentates of Europe (excepting the members of our own royal family) become little and contemptible! He has had no occasion to have recourse to any tricks of policy or arts of alarm; his authority has been sufficiently supported by the same means by which it was acquired, and his conduct has uniformly been characterised by wisdom, moderation, and firmness. Feeling gratitude to France for the assistance received from her in that great contest, which secured the independence of America, he did not choose to give up the system of neutrality. Having once laid down that line of conduct, which both gratitude and policy pointed out as most proper to be pursued, not all the insults and provocation of the French minister Genet could turn him from his purpose. Intrusted with the welfare of a great people, he did not allow the misconduct of another, with respect to himself, for one moment to withdraw his attention from their interest. He had no fear of the Jacobins, he felt no alarm from their principles, and considered no precaution as necessary in order to stop their progress.”

The intellectual *élite* of the country were gathered about the central figure in the two Houses of Congress, the Supreme Court of the United States (over which Jay presided for a while), and the Cabinet. Aided by the energetic counsel of Hamilton and the milder wisdom of Madison, Washington established on firm lines the fiscal policy of the country, persuaded a doubting Congress to assume the war debts of the States, with huge outcry of the “States’ Rights” party, who were too fastidious

either to pay their own debts or have them paid by the National Government, and when the Whiskey Rebellion broke out, in 1794, in Western Pennsylvania over the new excise laws, was ready to spring into the saddle and assume the command himself of the forces quickly raised to crush it.

Chronic grumblers of course there were, like Maclay of Pennsylvania, who hurled surreptitious vitriol at the President for going in state to Congress with postilions, and outriders, and other "monarchical" gear, or like Freneau, whose infamous attacks on his character and motives, later, caused Washington great pain; but, generally, the period 1789-1797 came to be looked upon as the Golden Age of the Republic, an age presided over by the man whose portrait Lord Shelburne considered the first ornament of his gallery; a man to whom the famous Thomas, Lord Erskine wrote:

"I have taken the liberty to introduce your august and immortal name in a short sentence which is to be found in the book I send to you. I have a large acquaintance among the most valuable and exalted classes of men; but you are the only human being for whom I ever felt an awful reverence. I sincerely pray God to grant a long and serene evening to a life so gloriously devoted to the universal happiness of the world."

When even his foes could speak of him thus, there was no fear that "the first magistrate of the Union" would wilfully go astray on questions vital to humanity as well as to his own people.



His policy toward the Indians, the wild Cherokees and Chickasaws, as well as to the more civilised Six Nations, shadowed as it might be by the awful disaster of General St. Clair, and the continued refusal of the British Ministry to deliver up the Northwestern fortresses, as stipulated by the Treaty of Paris, was always distinguished by the same calmness, patience, conciliation as he showed toward the civilised white potentates who sent stars and garters, instead of pipes of peace and strings of wampum, to symbolise their good feeling. The “Great Father” would gravely whiff the proffered calumet and pass it on to the painted and top-knotted savage, as ceremoniously as to a Spanish grandee, collared with the insignia of the Golden Fleece; and great would be the satisfaction, and numerous the guttural grunts as the diplomats of the wilderness swept, breeched and blanketed, out of his presence.

And thus the Indian “wild-fire,” that ran over prairie and mountain, scourged the Alleghanies and the Ohio Valley, and threatened at times the very existence of the Republic, grew gradually fainter, less intense, less malignant, conjured by kind words, just treatment, courtesy, and conciliation.

As the first administration drew to its close, men began to look anxiously into each other’s faces and inquire: What shall we do now? What is to become of us if....?

This “if,” fraught with such enormous meaning, could signify but one thing. The great builder of the Republic was still there; the foundations were

settling, but consolidation was not yet complete; the French Revolution had started alarming agitations; it appeared as if the fair fabric of American Union, reared amid such difficulties, planned with such wisdom, might collapse if the superintending architect deserted the structure at this critical moment, or let it settle not in cement of adamant but in quicksands of party strife.

Three or four powerful voices concentrated the sentiment of the entire country, when Hamilton, Jefferson, and Randolph wrote:

“ I received the most sincere pleasure,” said Hamilton, “ at finding in our last conversation, that there was some relaxation in the disposition you had before discovered to decline a reelection. Since your departure I have lost no opportunity of sounding the opinions of persons, whose opinions were worth knowing, on these two points; first, the effect of your declining upon the public affairs, and upon your own reputation; secondly, the effect of your continuing, in reference to the declarations you have made of your disinclination to public life. And I can truly say, that I have not found the least difference of sentiment on either point. The impression is uniform, that your declining would be to be deplored as the greatest evil that could befall the country at the present juncture, and as critically hazardous to your own reputation; that your continuance will be justified in the mind of every friend to his country by the evident necessity for it. . . . I trust, Sir, and I pray God, that you will determine to make a further sacrifice of your tranquility and happiness to the public good. I trust, that it need not continue above a year

or two more. And I think, that it will be more eligible to retire from office before the expiration of the term of election, than to decline a reelection.”

“The confidence of the whole Union,” said Jefferson, “is centred in you. Your being at the helm will be more than an answer to every argument which can be used to alarm and lead the people in any quarter into violence or secession. North and south will hang together, if they have you to hang on; and, if the first corrective of a numerous representation should fail in its effect, your presence will give time for trying others not inconsistent with the union and peace of the States.”

Randolph wrote:

“Permit me, then, in the fervor of a dutiful and affectionate attachment to you, to beseech you to penetrate the consequences of a dereliction of the reins. The constitution would never have been adopted, but from a knowledge that you had once sanctioned it, and an expectation that you would execute it. It is in a state of probation. The most inauspicious struggles are past, but the public deliberations need stability. You alone can give them stability. You suffered yourself to yield when the voice of your country summoned you to the administration. Should a civil war arise, you cannot stay at home. And how much easier will it be to disperse the factions, which are rushing to this catastrophe, than to subdue them after they shall appear in arms? It is the fixed opinion of the world, that you surrender nothing incomplete.”

Jefferson “hit the nail precisely on the head” when he summed up the whole situation in a single phrase: “North and south will hang together if

they have you to hang on.” Washington was the central pivot of the whole machine; and modest and diffident as he was, with his private affairs at Mount Vernon all entangled, and his nephew dying there, he could not but feel it to be true. Giving up for the hundredth time all personal considerations, he yielded, sacrificing himself with that touching and sublime trust in a superintending Providence which he had all his life practised, as he wrote to Randolph:

“With respect, however, to the interesting subject treated in your letter of the 5th instant, I can express but one sentiment at this time, and that is a wish, a devout one, that, whatever my ultimate determination shall be, it may be for the best. The subject never recurs to my mind but with additional poignancy; and, from the declining state of the health of my nephew, to whom my concerns of a domestic and private nature are entrusted, it comes with aggravated force. But as the All-wise Disposer of events has hitherto watched over my steps, I trust, that, in the important one I may soon be called upon to take, he will mark the course so plainly, as that I cannot mistake the way.”

Again the solemn moment of the election drew nigh: the ballots were again opened, and again the entire number was given to Washington—triumph more signal than before, for now New York, North Carolina, and Rhode Island voted, and Kentucky and Vermont had entered the Union, making fifteen instead of ten States now voting. John Adams, staunch Federalist, brilliant politician, perhaps the

most generally accomplished of the occupants of the White House, except Jefferson, was still the favourite for Vice-president. Universal pleasure was displayed at this event. Both Houses waited in state on the President, as they had often done before to offer their congratulations on his birthday. He took the simple oath of office, kissed the Bible, and was now in for another four years, far more difficult and perplexing than the first, testing his endurance to the utmost, yet accentuating more and more his perpetual purpose to leave behind him a nation and a government established upon the firmest foundations. The new administration opened under bright auspices.

The wild orgies in France, however, the cruel execution of Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette, the insane activity of the Jacobins, soon produced extreme tension between France and England, and war was declared in 1794.

The “burning question” of the neutrality of the United States burned to a white heat, ere it cooled under the icy touch of the President, whose statesmanship loomed up in outlines as clear and unmistakable as the Alps. “No entangling alliances,” cried he to the crazy fanatics who itched to embroil the country in a war with England by a noisy alliance with the French. Profoundly sympathising with both sides, devotedly attached to France and the LaFayettes, while every fibre of his nature and ancestry struck straight and deep into the heart of England, he managed to keep his head, and declare

in lucid and positive terms his firm purpose to side with neither. Parties for the first time appeared in Congress, and bitter and trenchant talk was tossed to and fro; jibes, jokes, doggered, pasquinades, and pamphlets of all sorts, jocose or ferocious, lent picturesqueness to the scene; and the misguided diplomats of Downing Street again went so far as to bring their country to the verge of war with the United States, by still refusing to surrender the frontier strongholds. Jay was sent to England to negotiate a treaty, which was arranged in 1795; but when it came before Congress, in 1796, for ratification, an acrimonious debate arose over its terms, which seemed to concede far too much to England in return for the surrender of the fortresses. Riots ensued; windows were smashed; violent scenes were enacted on the streets, worse than those which a year or two before had accompanied the conduct of the meddling French minister, Genet, as he proceeded to dispense letters of marque to French privateers, and organise open resistance to England on American soil. The Secretary of State, Edmund Randolph, sympathised with France, and was accused of receiving bribes from the French Cabinet. Fluctuations in the Cabinet ensued from time to time; Hamilton, Jefferson, Knox, and Randolph retired, and Wolcott, Pickering, and Charles Lee of Virginia took service as Secretaries of the Treasury and of State, and Attorney-general. Germs of an enlightened policy towards army and navy began to develop, and a liberal treaty with Spain soon

brought the country into active intercourse with Florida and the Spanish-speaking Americas.

All, however, was not serene sailing for the President. “Notwithstanding,” says Chief Justice Marshall, “the extraordinary popularity of the first president of the United States, scarcely has any important act of his administration escaped the most bitter invective.”

Party feeling indeed ran high at times, especially on the neutrality question, and “the calm light of mild philosophy,” as Washington phrased it, came near deserting him.

Of the bitterness of this party feeling Washington’s own words give ample testimony:

“To this I may add, and very truly, that until the last year or two, I had no conception that parties would, or even could go the lengths I have been witness to; nor did I believe, until lately, that it was within the bounds of probability . . . hardly within those of possibility . . . that while I was using my utmost exertions to establish a national character of our own, independent as far as our obligations and justice would permit, of every nation of the earth; and wished by steering a steady course to preserve this country from the horrors of a desolating war, I should be accused of being the enemy of one nation and subject to the influence of another; and to prove it, that every act of my administration would be tortured, and the grossest and most insidious misrepresentations of them be made, by giving one side only of a subject, and that too in such exaggerated and indecent terms as could scarcely

be applied to a Nero, . . . to a notorious defaulter, . . . or even to a common pick-pocket.”<sup>1</sup>

A batch of spurious letters, seriously reflecting on his character, had appeared twenty years before and caused the President such pain and indignation that he filed a solemn and explicit denial of their authenticity with the Secretary of State, before he laid down his office in 1797. These letters, known as “The Spurious Washington Letters,” he denounced as “a base forgery.”

When the closing years of his second administration were drawing on, he conceived the happy idea of bequeathing to his beloved people a legacy of thought and counsel, such as his forty-five years of devotion to this service had suggested to his fervent and active mind, thought and counsel the most precious ever bequeathed by a great leader to his people about to be left to their own thoughts and counsels. Of this noble document the eminent English historian, Alison, writes:

“The end of the same year [1796] witnessed the resignation of the presidency of the United States of America by General Washington, and his voluntary retirement into private life. Modern history has not a more spotless character to commemorate. Invincible in resolution, firm in conduct, incorruptible in integrity, he brought to the helm of a victorious republic the simplicity and innocence of rural life; he was forced into greatness by circumstances rather than led into it by inclination, and prevailed over his enemies rather

<sup>1</sup> Marshall, *The Life of George Washington*, vol. v, p. 675.



by the wisdom of his designs, and the perseverance of his character, than by any extraordinary genius for the art of war. A soldier from necessity and patriotism rather than disposition, he was first to recommend a return to pacific counsels when the independence of his country was secured ; and bequeathed to his countrymen an address on leaving their government to which there are few compositions of inspired wisdom which can bear a comparison. He was modest without diffidence ; sensible to the voice of fame without vanity ; independent and dignified without either asperity or pride. He was a friend to liberty, but not to licentiousness—not to the dreams of enthusiasts, but to those practical ideas which America had inherited from her British descent, and which were opposed to nothing so much as the extravagant love of power in the French democracy. Accordingly, after having signalised his life by a successful resistance to English oppression, he closed it by the warmest advice to cultivate the friendship of Great Britain ; and exerted his whole influence, shortly before his resignation, to effect the conclusion of a treaty of friendly and commercial intercourse between the mother country and its emancipated offspring. He was a Cromwell without his ambition ; a Sylla without his crimes ; and after having raised his country, by his exertions, to the rank of an independent state, he closed his career by a voluntary relinquishment of the power which a grateful people had bestowed.”

Many willing hands besides Washington's wrought on this paper—Hamilton, Madison, Pickering, made many suggestions, turned many phrases, communicated thoughts and ideas to be

woven into its substance; but the spirit of Washington is there supreme, lofty, calm, a superintending Providence incarnate, providing for the future and guarding against its perils with truest insight.

Never was the last will and testament of a great mind more touchingly embodied in words, noble in their simplicity, direct in their force, pregnant in their significance; and, for more than a hundred years, the country has followed its counsels with reverence and respect.

When his successor, John Adams, was sworn in on March 4, 1797, it was noticed that a radiant joy and peace settled on the face of Washington, an expression which never afterwards deserted it. When the French scare was at its height, and French cruisers began to ravage American trade in the West Indies, he was as ready as ever to hurry forward and help his country as Commander-in-chief of her forces, though he was an old and broken man seeking naught but rest.

The best summary of his administrative work is found in the words of Marshall:

“At home, a sound credit had been created; an immense floating debt had been funded in a manner perfectly satisfactory to the creditors; an ample revenue had been provided; those difficulties which a system of internal taxation, on its first introduction, is doomed to encounter, were completely removed; and the authority of the government was firmly established. Funds for the gradual payment of the debt had been provided; a considerable part of it had been actually

discharged ; and that system which is now operating its entire extinction, had been matured and adopted. The agricultural and commercial wealth of the nation had increased beyond all former example. The numerous tribes of warlike Indians, inhabiting those immense tracts which lie between the then cultivated country and the Mississippi, had been taught, by arms and by justice, to respect the United States, and to continue in peace. This desirable object having been accomplished, that humane system was established for civilising and furnishing them with the conveniences of life, which improves their condition, while it secures their attachment.

“ Abroad, the differences with Spain had been accommodated ; and the free navigation of the Mississippi had been acquired, with the use of New Orleans as a depot for three years, and afterwards until some other equivalent place should be designated. Those causes of mutual exasperation which had threatened to involve the United States in a war with the greatest maritime and commercial power in the world, had been removed ; and the military posts which had been occupied within their territory, from their existence as a nation, had been evacuated. Treaties had been formed with Algiers and with Tripoli, and no captures appear to have been made by Tunis ; so that the Mediterranean was opened to American vessels.

“ This bright prospect was indeed, in part, shaded by the glowing discontents of France. Those who have attended to the particular points of difference between the two nations will assign the causes to which these discontents are to be ascribed ; and will judge whether it was in the power of the executive to have avoided

them, without surrendering the real independence of the nation, and the most invaluable of all rights . . . the right of self-government.”<sup>1</sup>

Of the final act of this great administration—the surrender of the reins of government into the hands of his successor—John Adams wrote:

“There was scarcely a dry eye except Washington’s.”

<sup>1</sup> Marshall, *The Life of George Washington*, vol. v, p. 732.

## CHAPTER XXI

### “THE GLIMMERING TAPER”

“GRANDPAPA is much pleased with being once more *Farmer Washington*,” wrote Nellie Custis to Mrs. Wolcott, in 1797. For sixteen years, Washington had been separated from his beloved Mount Vernon, eight of those passed in the harassing anxieties of camps, and eight more, far from the green wildernesses of his youth, amid the brick and mortar of New York and Philadelphia. The evening hour, the hour of the contemplative lamp, dedicated to the loving family circle, was approaching. The home called him with irresistible eloquence. For nearly fifty years he had been a public man, absolutely devoted, body and soul, to the service of his country; yet all the time the intense domestic instincts had been there, chained down by his solemn sense of public responsibilities, ready at a moment's notice to break loose when the pressure was removed. The pruning-hook and the ploughshare triumphantly vindicated their strength over the sword, and Washington now turned to them as his proper implements and insignia.

Of his occupations at Mount Vernon he pleasantly writes to McHenry:

“I begin my diurnal course with the sun; if my hire-

lings are not in their places at that time I send them messages of sorrow for their indisposition; having put these wheels in motion, I examine the state of things further; the more they are probed, the deeper I find the wounds, which my buildings have sustained by an absence and neglect of eight years; by the time I have accomplished these matters, breakfast (a little after seven o'clock) is ready; this being over, I mount my horse and ride round my farms, which employs me until it is time to dress for dinner, at which I rarely miss seeing strange faces, come as they say out of respect for me. Pray, would not the word curiosity answer as well? And how different this from having a few social friends at a cheerful board! The usual time of sitting at table, a walk, and tea, bring me within the dawn of candlelight; previous to which, if not prevented by company, I resolve, that, as soon as the glimmering taper supplies the place of the great luminary, I will retire to my writing-table and acknowledge the letters I have received; but when the lights are brought, I feel tired and disinclined to engage in this work, conceiving that the next night will do as well. The next night comes, and with it the same causes for postponement, and so on. . . . Having given you the history of a day, it will serve for a year."

He was already in the attitude of the parting guest making preparations for the hour of his departure. The luminary, which Franklin had significantly pointed to when Washington presided over the Constitutional Convention, had climbed to the meridian and was now gently and softly shrouding itself in the lovely mists of twilight, "a glim-

mering taper” emitting only the calm and solemn light that shines more and more unto the perfect day. But there was nothing mawkish or sentimental in the last days at Mount Vernon. With the perfect strength of mind and of physique that had always characterised him, he viewed life with cheerfulness, retired at nine, rose at four, attended personally to the loads of letters that daily littered his table, went forth, compass in hand, to survey this or that piece of ground, personally superintended the copying of his private and public correspondence, looked carefully after his hundreds of dependents, and, in true Old Virginia style, kept open house for the throngs of pilgrims who made Mount Vernon the Mecca of the eighteenth century. Hither came the mocking Talleyrand, the philosophic Volney, the exiled Louis Philippe and his brothers, visitors from every clime and kingdom, writers, artists, veterans of the Revolution, members of cabinets and congresses, gentle and simple alike; all were hospitably welcomed. The General’s favourite expressions about this idyllic existence were: “my own vine and fig-tree,” “the shades of retirement,” “floating gently down the stream of time.” A great peace had come upon him, and the evening glow was melting into that mellow twilight that sometimes wells up behind a great mountain, and makes it loom in golden distinctness against the illumined West. His comprehensive care neglected neither jot nor tittle, neither tomb nor testament: everything was thought of. He rode from twelve to

fifteen miles over his estates every day; seed-time and harvest came and went, every phase of each being followed by his vigilant eye. He gathered his old servants affectionately about him and established them in comfortable quarters: "Old Billy," his body servant during the Revolution, now a cripple, Jack the fisherman, watching on the river for the cook's signal to bring the fish for dinner; and many another ancient and faithful dependent. A humorous gleam is again shed over this period, by an amusing contract drawn up by the ex-president with his gardener, whose besetting sin was a fondness for the convivial cup. Among other details occurs the following:

"Four dollars at Christmas, with which he may be drunk four days and four nights; two dollars at Easter to effect the same purpose; two dollars at Whitsuntide to be drunk for two days; a dram in the morning, and a drink of grog at dinner at noon."

The accomplished housewifery of Mrs. Washington caused many a visitor to linger with fond reluctance and overstay his time, while the marriage of fair Nellie Custis to Lawrence Lewis, regular visits on Sunday to old Pohick Church, canvasback duck and old Madeira at the table of friends and neighbours up and down the river, varied the rural scene and mingled with the oils in which the taper swam a rich perfume of domestic joy.

When the wild alarms of the maritime war with France, succeeding the insolent demands of the



Barbary pirates, drew on, no one more heartily than Washington echoed the celebrated saying of Pinckney: “Millions for defence, not a cent for tribute!” In fact, the conduct of the French Directorate, in its aggravated insults to America at this time, caused the one pang that thrilled through the tranquillity of Mount Vernon. At sixty-eight Washington’s cup was full; the century was about to run out; at its verge where the old was about to become the new, where the eighteenth century with its storm and its calm, its turbulence and its revolutions, its wondrous evolutions in politics and civilisation, its eras of Anne and George, Frederick the Great, and Louis XVI., and Washington, was about to transform itself noiselessly into the century of Napoleon, of Waterloo, of Victoria, of Sedan, of United Italy and Imperial Germany: almost at the solemn moment of transformation, quick as a flash, silent as a dream, beautiful as that strange moment which Raphael has selected as the moment of the Transfiguration, the summons came.

It was a Saturday night, almost at the end of the century, December 14, 1799, that, succumbing to an attack of acute laryngitis brought on by exposure to the December snow, Washington folded his arms across his breast, straightened his limbs decently in his bed, and casting a last look at his beloved wife, sitting in silent anguish at the foot of his bed, breathed his last.



## PEDIGREE OF THE WASHINGTONS.

THE Washingtons, like the Balls, were an ancient and honourable family long settled in that Eastern part of Virginia whence emanated the early illustrious families of the Old Dominion.

“Until recently,” says John Fiske,<sup>1</sup> “there was some uncertainty as to the pedigree of George Washington, but the researches of Mr. Fitz Gilbert Waters, of Salem, have conclusively proved that he was descended from the Washingtons of Sulgrave, in Northamptonshire, a family that had for generations worthily occupied positions of honour and trust. In the Civil War the Washingtons were distinguished Royalists. The commander who surrendered Worcester in 1646 to the famous Edward Whalley was Col. Henry Washington; and his cousin John, who came to Virginia in 1657, was great-grandfather of George Washington. After the fashion that prevailed a hundred years ago, the most illustrious of Americans felt little interest in his ancestry; but with the keener historic sense and broader scientific outlook of the

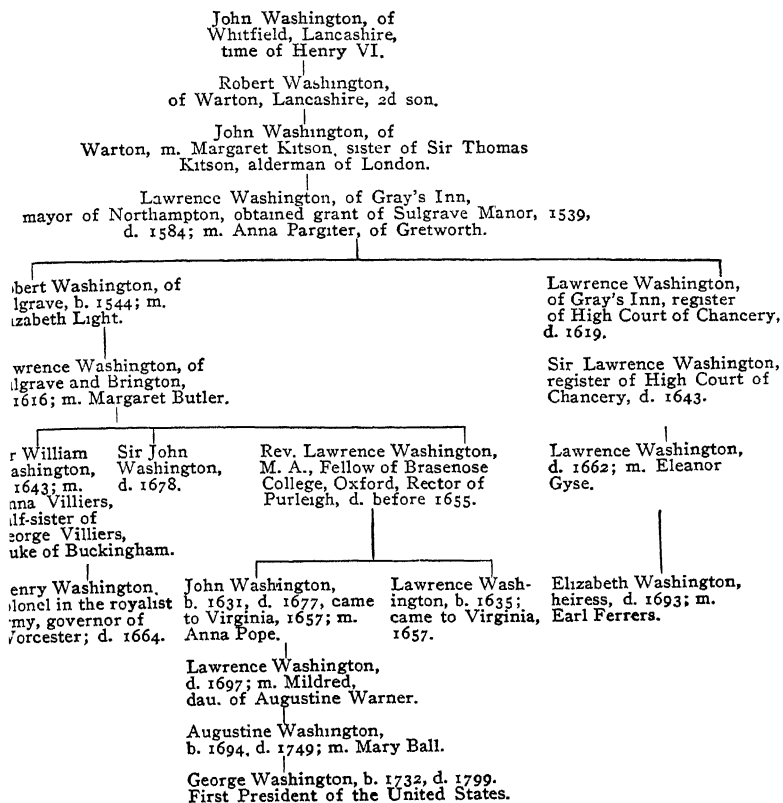
<sup>1</sup> *Old Virginia and Her Neighbours*. Houghton, Mifflin & Co. Vol. ii, p. 25.

present day, the importance of such matters is better appreciated. The pedigrees of horses, dogs, and fancy pigeons have a value that is quotable in terms of hard cash. Far more important, for the student of human affairs, are the pedigrees of men. By no possible ingenuity of constitution-making or of legislation can a society made up of ruffians and boors be raised to the intellectual and moral level of a society made up of well-bred merchants and yeomen, parsons and lawyers. One might as well expect to see a dray horse win the Derby. It is, moreover, only when we habitually bear in mind the threads of individual relationship that connect one country with another, that we get a really firm and concrete grasp of history. Without genealogy the study of history is comparatively lifeless. No excuse is needed, therefore, for giving in this connection a tabulated abridgment of the discoveries of Mr. Waters concerning the forefathers of George Washington. Beside the personal interest attaching to every thing associated with that immortal name, this pedigree has interest and value as being in large measure typical. It is a fair sample of good English middle-class pedigrees, and it is typical as regards the ancestry of leading Cavalier families in Virginia; an inspection of many genealogies of those who came between 1649 and 1670 yields about the same general impression."

The intertwining of the Ball and the Washington mottoes in this ever-famous union: *Coelumque tueri* ("Contemplate the Heavens") and *Exitus acta probat* ("The End proves the Act") produced a result surpassing the fairest dream of this prosaic genealogist.

# Pedigree of the Washingtons<sup>1</sup>

*Arms. — Argent, two bars and in chief three mullets Gules.*



<sup>1</sup> *Old Virginia and Her Neighbours*, by John Fiske, Vol. ii, p. 27. Courtesy of Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

“On the whole,” continues John Fiske,<sup>1</sup> “It was a noble type of rural gentry that the Old Dominion had to show. Manly simplicity, love of home and family, breezy activity, disinterested public spirit, thorough wholesomeness and integrity,—such were the features of the society whose consummate flower was George Washington.”

<sup>1</sup> *Old Virginia and Her Neighbours*. Houghton, Mifflin & Co. Vol. ii, p. 267.

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